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THE  
STRATEGY  
OF  
TERROR



THE  
STRATEGY  
OF  
TERROR

*Europe's Inner Front*

by  
EDMOND TAYLOR



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PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

**TO**  
**MY MOTHER**





### PUBLISHERS' NOTE

OWING to delays in the mails during wartime and the need for prompt publication, the author was not able to read proofs of this book.



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# I

## WAR NEVER ENDS

THERE is one of Europe's battle-fronts no war correspondent has yet adequately covered: the battle-front of the mind, where ideas and ideologies, propaganda and emotions, clash in ordered ranks, disciplined like soldiers.

On this front there is no truce; here war never ends. It was raging before the first gun spoke; it will still be raging when the diplomats of Europe gather under the chandeliers or by some lakeside to dictate or negotiate a peace. Peace offensives are just offensives on the battle-front of the mind and war scares are just war.

My book is an attempt to cover this little-known battle-front. It is the kind of unpretentious, hurried history which foreign correspondents today write as they run, that is, history not only seen but felt and lived by the historian. I am keenly interested by the strategy and tactics of psychological warfare, but I am more interested by the human drama underlying it, and this dramatic element is precisely what most writers on the subject have overlooked.

We hear a lot about the war of propaganda, the war of nerves,

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and other names for the war in the mind, but we are apt to think of these expressions as metaphorical, whereas they are literally descriptive of a form of conflict which is becoming more and more important in modern life. In reality, the war in the mind, the war of nerves, or whatever you choose to call it, is, like any war, an organized conflict of group-wills. It has its own battlefields, and these produce not only their victories and defeats, but their own thrills and their peculiar horrors.

A trick of the tongue makes it hard for us to realize this. We say 'war of propaganda' and at the back of our minds there is a sort of Walt Disney image of little uniformed lies charging the enemy in syntactical phalanxes. Obviously, only a poet like Disney or a neo-Platonic mystic can see a human drama in such a conflict, because lies are not men but merely the words of men; when a lie kills a lie there is no blood.

I am writing this book because I see a different image. I am not interested in the massacre of ideas as such, but in the impact on human beings of ideas used as weapons. Tactically, the drama of Europe lies in the clash of ideals and the tug of contradictory loyalties, pitted the ones against the others by conscious propagandists to whom the mind of Europe is only a battlefield, sentiments and ideals so many weapons to be used against the enemy. From a human point of view, the drama of Europe is the havoc wrought by this psychological war on the battlefield of the mind, and of this war I am well fitted to bear witness; in more than ten years of living in Europe I have not only covered it but lived with it and collected scars from it.

When I hear expressions like 'war of nerves,' 'war of propaganda,' I think of my scars and of the scars which my friends carry. I remember those inhuman diplomatic crises, more un-

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nerving than war, that we lived through, particularly the one before Munich. I remember all those stupid, bitter political quarrels, felt like a personal grievance, between friends and within families; quarrels about Spain, quarrels about Munich. I remember all the false hopes, all the bitter disillusionments. Above all I remember the paralyzing political despair which grew and grew until it almost overshadowed our private lives, the feeling that this world of ours would always be a madhouse and a jungle, that collective efforts to bring reason into it were fruitless, individual escape impossible.

All this was part of the havoc on the battlefield of the mind; these were the mental scars. Even I, an American living in Europe and a spectator by profession, collected some. Even you who read, staying at home in America, collected slight ones. In Europe the scars were much graver, for Europeans of all classes take their politics more seriously than we do. The repercussions of public on private life are deeper and more intimate.

In the war of the mind which preceded the military war and accompanied it there were many collective tragedies like the destruction of Austria and Czechoslovakia. There were also innumerable private tragedies as in any war. Finally there was the major European catastrophe of the war itself, the military one, which in my opinion developed directly out of what Europeans called the war of nerves.

This book, then, deals with the war of nerves in Europe, which I prefer to think of in its broadest sense simply as the war in the mind of Europe. It assumes that the war in the mind is endless. It covers a climactic phase in the psychological war and also in the history of Europe, the period of acute international tension dating back to the summer of 1938, the formal outbreak of war



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in the fall of 1939, and the first months of war. These are the limits in time of the sector of the inner front which I covered. There are, of course, no limits in space since the front was everywhere, even in countries that were officially neutral, but I concentrate particularly on France because France is the country of Europe which I know best.

I cover this battle-front of the mind which I have chosen as a war correspondent would cover a battle-front of armies. I show what the master propagandists who are the generals in the nerve-war try to make their own troops and the enemy troops think and feel, and with what success. Since I am mainly concerned, as I have said, with the human drama of this inner war, I write from the point of view of the nerve-privates rather than that of the nerve-generals.

I try to tell what individual Europeans and groups of Europeans in the various countries of this continent thought and felt about their relations with one another at different epochs of the near past, toward what mental goals they are heading in the near future. I analyze their myths, their superstitions, and their ideals, and the political rationalizations by which they adjust themselves to successive political situations. I try to trace the changes in their opinions and emotional attitudes, considering these changes as fluctuations of the line of battle in the war of the mind.

For the most part my coverage of this human drama depends on personal observation. There is little documentation available. Speeches and books of politicians and clippings from newspaper give some idea of the conflicting forces trying to influence public opinion, but they reflect public opinion only indirectly. Fortunately I had the foresight at certain particularly dramatic

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moments in the near past to keep a conscientious diary of events observed from the point of view of this book. More sporadically, my wife did the same thing from a womanly, more personal, and therefore more human, point of view. These diaries, I think, make interesting reading today and I make frequent use of them throughout this book. Curiously, the things which I find most helpful for the purpose are not the objective observations, the conversations recorded, but the reflections, speculations, and deductions, often erroneous, by which we reacted to the emotional and mental stimuli in events. As we were reacting, so were millions of other men and women in Europe. Naturally, the reaction was not always the same among these millions. Always, however, my reaction was the same as the reaction of some group, and this reaction was always part of the ripples stirred up by some propaganda-pebble.

Admittedly, it is difficult to write accurate history from such scanty and uncertain material. My excuse is that of all historical materials the material I am handling is the most volatile; usually the historian finds it has evaporated before he can get to it and it survives only in biography.

And now, back to the front, or rather, in to the front.

## II

### THE WORD BECOMES WAR

AFTER twenty years and ten months of fitful peace, which had not prevented some parts of Europe from serving as battlefields and had come in its later days more and more to resemble a nightmare, the second major European war in a generation broke out on September 3, 1939. A simple but rather strange ceremonial marked the transition from what had been called peace to war — a war which has still to be given a name, an orphan war. In the first light of September 1, the German army and air force attacked Poland without any particular ceremonial but with great effectiveness, thereby putting into practice the *Blitzkrieg* which had been the most persistent nightmare of peoples in the years that were called peace. Some hours later, while the German aviators in the full morning light were settling down to methodical destruction and the *panzer* divisions of the German army were probing with surgical precision for the nerve-centers of the Polish field forces, Adolf Hitler at the Kroll Opera House in Berlin announced to the German people that he was leaving for the front as the first soldier of the Reich and that Germany would render blow for blow, no

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more and no less. Revealing rather than proclaiming that a state of war existed between Germany and Poland, der Führer's speech was purely propitiatory ceremonial and left the state of relations between Germany and the Western Powers intact, though it acknowledged by implication the treaties binding France and England to come to Poland's aid.

These treaties were promptly invoked by the Polish Government through diplomatic channels, but the British and French governments neither launched a counter-*Blitzkrieg* against Germany nor sent planes or ships to Poland. Instead, in the night of September 1 they each sent notes to the German Government summoning it to withdraw the attacking forces from Poland, failing which they would be obliged to honor their treaty obligations.

In the eyes of the world the British and French notes were ultimatums. The threat of war was implicit in them and it seemed that to the Allies the ceremonial justification of the war they were about to declare lay in what Thurman Arnold would doubtless call the folklore of diplomacy, the fossilized tradition preserved in the chancelleries of Europe from the days of personal rulers who, like other gentlemen, possessed a personal honor and on occasion must fight for it.

Another piece of diplomatic folklore, however, was invoked to lengthen the equivocal twilight of peace. When the German Government through the Italian foreign minister, Count Ciano, inquired whether the Allied notes had the character of ultimatums, the official answer was that they had not. It was not until the next morning, September 3, forty-eight hours after the commencement of the *Blitzkrieg* on the marches of the east, that the British and French ambassadors in Berlin gave the war a firm

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foundation in protocol by making their farewell calls to the Wilhelmstrasse.

Receiving a negative answer to the notes of their governments, they informed the German Government that England and France would consider themselves as in a state of war with Germany from 12 noon and 5 P.M. respectively.

Neither side made any other declaration of war, and neither side took immediate advantage of the release from peace-time restrictions secured through ceremonial to commit an act of hostility. There was no outward sign to mark the passage from peace to war. When the hour of war came — the hour of the French war — I was in my office near the center of Paris, working. My first act as a war correspondent was to take my gas mask, which I had been carrying for the last forty-eight hours, and walk to the Opera *métro* station, where I knew there was a deep shelter. When I got there I looked at my watch and saw it was four and a half minutes after five, so I made a mental note that without hurrying unduly one could get from the office to the best air-raid shelter in the quarter in less than five minutes, and then I sat down on the sidewalk terrace of the Café de la Paix and ordered a drink, which is what a score of other persons were doing at the same time.

The streets were quiet and almost empty; nearly all the men and women I saw on the sidewalks appeared to be Sunday strollers, apparently unconcerned and looking at once bored and rested, as Sunday strollers usually do. The atmosphere was like the end of one of the great national holidays, say that July Fourteenth, when people are tired of dancing in the streets and are already thinking of the next day's work. I felt bored too, and depressed after the strain of the preceding

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days, thinking the war had begun strangely, as indeed it had.

Looking back on it, I cannot even say when, psychologically, this strange war did start. In one sense it began when the first German tanks and the first German planes moved into or over Poland. In another sense the ceremonial date, the last or French one, was also the real commencement, for it was a threshold exactly like previous thresholds save in this one respect: once crossed, there was no turning back from it. Yet what lay on the other side of this threshold, immediately at least, resembled so much what lay on this side that any dividing line between the two seemed arbitrary. So it might be said with equal truth, and quite literally save in a ceremonial sense, that the war started at Munich or even with the *Anschluss*; or conversely, that it has not yet started at all (when this book was started, a little more than three months after the formal outbreak).

In any case, September 3, 1939, was a psychological landmark, for even if the state of war which followed it differed little in reality from the state of peace which preceded it, the word had changed, and words exercise a strange tyranny over human affairs. The drama which was played out in the mind of Europe, in the minds of individual Europeans, on this date was the struggle between the word 'peace' with all its associations and the word 'war' with all its associations. 'War' won, but the hesitations due to the struggle and the contradiction between political reality and the idea of reality created by words are both reflected in an abstract form in the diplomatic ceremonial which the Allied governments went through to enter into war with Germany.

In the first place, the mere timetable of events from 5 A.M. on September 1 to 5 P.M. on September 3 betrays either a lingering faith in miracles on the part of the French and British Govern-

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ments, or a complete absence of faith in their ability to help Poland in view of the kind of attack to which she was being subjected. With the man in the street, at least in France, there was certainly a lingering faith in miracles. As late as three o'clock in the afternoon of September 3 my concierge, a sensible Frenchman, knowing that the British ultimatum had expired and that the French one would expire in two hours, said he did not care, he was sure Mussolini or Roosevelt or someone would do something at the last minute and there would be no war.

With the governments, which knew perfectly that if Poland were to be helped at all it could only be in the first hours, I think it was the conviction that Poland could not be helped at all which led them to drag out the ceremonial, though the extent of the delay and the time lag between the British and French ultimatums may have been a concession to elements in the two cabinets which still had faith in miracles and appeasement.

Was the myth of diplomatic honor, then, the real as well as the ceremonial reason for the war? It seems improbable, after the highly elastic understanding of this myth which the same statesmen in Paris and London had shown in the case of France's ally Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, they were keenly conscious of the politically disastrous consequences of dishonor, however mythical, as illustrated by the collapse of morale at home and prestige abroad after Munich.

Until the archives of the French, British, and German Governments for the period immediately preceding the crisis of September, 1939, are published, any discussion of the grand strategy behind the ceremonial outbreak of war is highly speculative. I have heard different versions from sources that claimed to be authorized, but I am not sure of any of them. My own highly

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speculative hypothesis, based partly on inside sources and partly on analysis of actual events, is as follows: I believe that at least ever since Munich the French General Staff and the dominant cliques in the French and British cabinets were convinced that Hitler had a plan, or at least a hope, of establishing German hegemony in Europe, implying the vassalization of France and England, through the same peculiar technique that he had employed so successfully in the case of Austria and Czechoslovakia. Originally, according to my theory, the French and British hoped to outdistance Germany in an armaments race and thereby become too strong and confident to be defeated by a 'war of nerves.' By completing the annexation of Czechoslovakia before it was expected and by preparing the attack on Poland Hitler stole a march on his adversaries. The diplomatic riposte failed when Ribbentrop sprung the bombshell of the non-aggression pact with Russia on August 23.

From that moment Poland was lost, as Czechoslovakia had been lost since the *Anschluss*. But Munich had shown the mistake of gaining time for armaments by sacrificing morale and allies. Therefore though Poland could not be saved it was necessary to save honor by pretending to save her. Thanks to their Intelligence Services, the French and British knew that Germany could not be deterred by the threat of having to fight a defensive war in the west, but would engage so much of her air force and army in the east that she could not wage an offensive war in the west for at least a month. That would give the Allies time to take all the necessary precautions against a double *Blitzkrieg*. They themselves would not provoke her by taking the offensive seriously, so that the war would settle down to a long siege during which the armaments race would go on as before, with the block-



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ade as an added handicap to Germany and wartime dictatorships to protect them from the attack from within — the Achilles' heel of the democracies. Germany would have Poland, but the democracies would have become totalitarian, thanks to the magic in the word 'war'; in other words, liberated from their 'mythology' and therefore able to cope with the enemy. In the sense that no military showdown was contemplated in the immediate future, I think the Allied Governments employed the word 'war' abusively, just as the Nazis had for so long used the word 'peace' abusively; a sham war ended a sham peace, leaving Europe much as it had been before, a battlefield of the mind on the main theaters of action, and a slaughterhouse on the minor, detached ones, wherever a military aggressor incurred no danger.

I do not know that this view of the war is correct or complete, but it has the advantage of explaining many things during the crisis which ended summer and peace that otherwise I could not explain. For if this really was the beginning of the war in the usual sense, no war ever had such a strange psychological background.

Unlike the war of 1914, a sturdier war since it flowered in the beginning of August, which is the normal mating season of armies, this one did not fall upon them unawares like a celestial cataclysm, nor was it announced to the informed by definite portents as a celestial cataclysm would be announced to astronomers. Things and men did not give out that peculiar secretion which Jean Giraudoux says they do at the approach of war. All throughout the summer there were rumors of war, but there were no premonitions of war. Late in August, after the announcement of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact, which seemed to make war inevitable, a highly cultured and highly intuitive

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French friend, with many sources of information, said to me:

'I still do not believe in war because I can't feel it. In 1914 I felt it several weeks in advance, as an animal feels the approach of death; I knew we were doomed. But this time I have no such feeling; things look very black, but I am convinced it will all blow over somehow.'

My own intuitions did not tell me anything, or rather gave me contradictory messages. One day war seemed the greater likelihood, the next day peace. Like everyone I thought war possible or even likely, but until the third of September I was never absolutely certain of it. Even on the second of September, after hearing Premier Edouard Daladier make a speech that was equivalent to a declaration of war on Germany, my belief in war was still not absolute, for it was momentarily shaken by a wild rumor of some peace maneuver which ran through the lobbies of the Chamber at a certain moment. It may seem from this that I was simply badly informed, but it was not a question of information. All my information, confidential as well as public, pointed toward war, from the twenty-third of August pointed so imperiously as to leave no room for doubt. Yet doubt slipped in. As many Frenchmen were doing I thought — and sometimes wrote: 'By all outward signs war is inevitable, but ...'

In the minds of Europeans the adverb 'but' acquired a magic power to annul any affirmation preceding it, without its being necessary to follow it with a stronger contrary affirmation. 'But' was our mental vaccine against the reality of approaching war.

Thanks to it, war when it came was neither unexpected nor real. If the premonition of doom was totally lacking, the consciousness of danger was very sharp, throughout the whole

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summer. We knew that the sickly peace fathered at Versailles was due to have another crisis; it was because there had been so many and because we had been sitting so long at the bedside that we could not know this crisis was to end in death. Belief that peace must die had been growing for several years; Europe was resigned to the idea of another war. But why this year rather than next? Europe believed war inevitable and therefore accepted it, but always it was next year's war, so that this one when it came seemed a premature birth. "

Even stranger than the certainty of next year's war was the \*certainty of this year's crisis. From early in the summer it was known by ministers and by charwomen that there would be a crisis and that it would come in August. Many persons also knew the actual dates, though these turned out to be wrong.

Belief in the crisis was the result of a new political myth which had grown up in Europe: the war of nerves. Like most myths this one was founded on reality, but to the popular mind it had come to have the sense of a reassurance, which was not exactly how the nerve-warriors understood it. Because a war of nerves was being waged, a crisis was considered inevitable but a war of cannons and bombing planes unlikely. Some feared or hoped that the reformed appeasers in Paris and London, obeying their masters, the 'trusts' (evil forces of finance), would lose this war of nerves as they had lost the last one. Others thought it was Hitler's nerves which would give way. Later in this book I hope to show that many of these strange intellectual attitudes were not spontaneous growths but the result of purposeful though conflicting propagandas; for the moment I am only interested in exposing them clearly.

The psychological atmosphere which prevailed toward the

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middle of the summer is, I think, accurately depicted by the following entry from my diary for the first of August:

‘Nothing has changed as far as I can see except the heading on my calendar, which reads August instead of July, but in the night, unheeding in sleep, it seems that I have crossed a mystic meridian, and so have we all. Yesterday was July, ill-favored in aspect but harmless to man; the month when nothing would happen. Today is August, the month of harvests and fate, swollen with menace. Anything can happen, something is certainly going to happen. Will it be war? I don’t know. Many Frenchmen, and as far as I can gather, many Americans, profess to believe it. According to the French Institute of Public Opinion, forty-five per cent of the population believe there will be war before the end of the year, therefore probably in August. Nearly everyone agrees that sometime during the month or at latest early in the autumn a new international crisis will come to a head, that is, push itself into our field of vision above the jagged range of our permanent European crisis. “Look out for August,” everyone has been saying for weeks past, and now here it is August.’

The statement that forty-five per cent of the French people appeared to believe in war before the end of the year seems to contradict my statement that there were no premonitions of war in Europe, but it is my opinion that most of the persons who said they believed in war merely believed in the crisis and called it war, either for magical reasons or as prophylaxis against shock. Those who really did have a premonition of war, if there were any, were to be found in the opposing camp, the camp which was publicly sure it would all blow over. Sober minds like ministers and garagists did not take a position one way or the other

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about the war, but their sources of information were categorical about the crisis, as illustrated by the following note from my diary, likewise of August 1:

'How do I know there is going to be a crisis, if not a war? ... All I know is that the French Government believes or professes to believe that there is going to be a diplomatic crisis in the near future. The public believes it because the Government have been saying it for weeks. It is something everyone takes for granted. ... The other night at a friend's house I had a little talk with the Minister of the Interior, Albert Sarraut, "The one who has a clever brother"' (Maurice Sarraut, publisher of the *Dépêche de Toulouse*), according to Clemenceau's cruel gibe, though Albert is anything but a fool. He was sitting like a pasha surrounded by a group of beautiful women, and he very kindly left them for a moment to talk to me about Spanish refugees, in whom he takes a sincere interest. ... Somehow or other the question came up, and he said in a matter-of-fact way that of course vacations were out of the question because there would be a serious diplomatic crisis during the month of August. The tone he used was an intermediate one, not just stating common knowledge like my garagist or non-official French friends whom we meet, but giving the weight of official confirmation to a general supposition.'

A fortnight later the tension had increased, but the psychological atmosphere was much the same.

'As far as I am concerned,' my wife wrote in her diary on August 15, 'and as far as the swarms of Parisian holiday-makers who today are not reading the papers but sprawling on them in the Bois de Boulogne are concerned, nothing has happened except that the sun is shining for the first time in six weeks. Yet that

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awe-inspiring something which is to happen this summer has drawn so near again that it soon will invade our private lives, overshadow our thoughts, and hover above our uneasy sleep. We go on living just as usual, yet we all know that the present crisis will have to end somehow and that there is a very good chance that this end will be war. We live from one "fatal day" to another, and when nothing happens we feel pretty grateful and the *Daily Express* is able to print on the front page: "Today was to be a crisis day — well, nothing has happened." But on the whole we are not fooled and we know that the real crisis is yet to come, whether it be war or just the breakdown of our way of living and thinking. Whatever happens these next few months will be fateful ones.'

This feeling of living under the Damoclean sword which my wife expresses was felt by every man and woman living in Europe. Like a guilty secret it lay between us and our sleep, our enjoyment of the present and our hope of the future. In quiet moments it was a sediment at the bottom of our consciousness, but the slightest stir troubled it and clouded all our thoughts. Simple people felt it as much as the 'intelligentsia.' They took it into consideration as a normal factor in making or not making plans — getting married, having children — above all that — buying a house or taking a vacation. For nearly two years alert real-estate agents in France had been stressing shelter facilities in their publicity, and at the beginning of the summer of 1939 inaccessibility to enemy bombers took precedence over the usual tourist attractions in the literature put out by rural hotelkeepers and chambers of commerce for the beguilement of city folk about to take their holidays. By the middle of August the tension had become intolerable in the sense that it offended men's ideas of

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what in a just universe they considered to be the proper lot of man, the fair levy in worry and pain they owed the celestial *fisc* for the privilege of living. God and Hitler, they felt, were both exaggerating.

For this was not the first time. For several years we had watched the clouds of war slowly gathering, as they had gathered periodically for our fathers since the beginning of time and would doubtless continue to gather for the generations of our sons, watched the darkening of the first peace built by man with despair but resignation, bowing to the eternal law and in a sense relieved to submit to it after vain revolt. Only bankers and businessmen continued to believe in peace, retaining out of the Geneva creed a superstitious faith in the magic of the round-table; priests and generals, usually their allies in upholding the old order, hailed the return to sanity and humility, opened indulgent arms to the prodigal masses, not loving war but hating revolt and consoled in the thought that under their order no one generation ever went twice into fire.

Yet in May, 1938, the British Ambassador in Berlin saved peace by ordering a special train for his staff, simulating the beginning of war, and in September, 1938, survivors of Verdun and the Chemin des Dames were once more digging trenches — in front of the Maginot Line — while their wives and children were fleeing in the night from blackened cities where fear stalked through the streets like a medieval plague.

Yet in December, 1938, troops were massing on both sides of the Tunisian-Libyan frontier, mobs were howling 'Corsica' in front of the French Embassy in Rome and writing 'Caporetto' on subway stations in Paris, officers in the French colonial army were writing their wives that they would not be coming home on

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Christmas leave, and though in London and Berlin they still spoke of appeasement there was no peace.

Yet in April, 1939, workmen were feverishly digging air-raid shelters in the greening lawns of the Champs-Élysées, amateur soothsayers were announcing that the war was for the fifth, the fifteenth, the first of May; one morning standing in front of a map in Paris, discussing the flash from Berlin that part of the German fleet had put out for spring maneuvers, a diplomatic friend, pacing up and down and looking at his watch said, 'If the British don't sink those German pocket battleships before they reach the Atlantic, they are — — — fools.'

All this lay behind us in August, 1939, and exactly the same thing lay ahead. Uncertainty and despair between the crises, the sharp tooth of fear as they approached. Thanks to the official myth of the war of nerves, the explanations that fear, hope, despair, scientifically dosed and alternated, but not necessarily having any objective basis, were being used by Hitler as weapons to wear down the will-to-resist of the French and British peoples; thanks to the rigorous parallelism, constantly stressed by the democratic press, between the nascent crisis of 1939 and the remembered crisis of 1938 — which had not ended in war — fear never developed into panic as it had before Munich. As long as the crisis kept to schedule the hope never died that it would end in a victorious Munich, or simply another one.

Yet fear, bearable or not, was always with us during the summer of 1939. Fear of war as a collective catastrophe, undepictable to the imagination like death, though no less terrible for that, and the more precise fear of planes in the night, dropping explosive punishment as well as death. Aerial bombing of cities has definitely entered into folklore as one of the horror-legends of our



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time. That, as I noticed myself in Spain, is one of the reasons for the peculiar effectiveness of this weapon against troops in the field, particularly when inexperienced and unprotected. Bombing is part of the war in the mind; perhaps this war will dissipate the nightmare, but it was still very vivid at the outbreak.

A subsidiary fear involved in the bombing-complex was the fear of poison gas, popularly the most dreaded of modern weapons because the most magical. In a serious form it was the most improbable form of attack, and probably the least dangerous, but it was the most feared. (In the first air-raid alarm in Paris, shortly after the outbreak of war, I saw women who did not possess gas masks putting wet handkerchiefs over the faces of their babies, though no planes had even been heard and the anti-aircraft batteries had not fired.)

During the whole summer the sinister-looking trenches scarring the lawns and the parks, the free distribution of gas masks, and above all the weekly testing of the sirens — a powerful direct assault on the nerves apart from the connotations — were so many *mementi mori* which helped keep alive our fear. Like all Parisians, my wife and I took our air-raid and anti-gas precautions at least half-seriously and participated to some degree in the collective phobia they expressed.

It was taken for granted by laymen that a mass bombardment of Paris and London by the German aviation would be the first act of war if war came. From my meager technical knowledge I was inclined to doubt this, but I expected at least a demonstration, or an attack on the airfields around Paris. Neither did I accept the general belief that the first warning of war would be when the sirens woke you up just before dawn, but my skep-

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ticism did not prevent me toward the end of August from leaving my car at night in front of the door instead of in the garage — in the mistaken idea that I would have time to get a safe distance from town before the planes reached Paris — nor did it keep my heart from pounding when one peaceful Sunday morning the sirens did go off, by mistake. In fact on Thursdays, the day of the siren tests, when I heard them I used to glance mechanically at my watch, as many other people did, just to make sure that it was the normal hour for them, and not the war starting.

The following brief excerpts from my wife's diary reveal the increasingly obsessive force of the bomb-phobia as the crisis neared its climax:

*August 23*

'In the morning I drove out toward Saint-Germain in search of a place where we could get out of the way of bombardments yet remain near Paris. Unlike last September I immediately found the ideal spot on the edge of the Forest of Marly. . . . I felt delighted and possessed of the week-end spirit. . . . I arrange to have the room for a week until we know where we are.'

*August 22*

'We had dinner in the café downstairs with David Scott (correspondent of the London *News Chronicle*) and a young Englishman whose gaiety was a bit hysterical because he would be called up if it happened. We had caviar because future war correspondents have a right to do themselves well. We laughed a great deal and planned to hire a trailer to live in, in case of war. Ed had seen Bullitt, who cheerfully announced he was going to continue to occupy the Embassy at the Place de la Concorde

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until blown out. We discussed air-raid shelters and where the deepest *métros* were. Jack Sanford of the London *Daily Herald* came and joined us and later Molly (a Catalan friend), well dined and wined, swept in with old Robert Dell (of the *Manchester Guardian*) in tow.'

August 24

'Old Marguerite (our maid) saw her son off last night. He went back to the Maginot Line. "I did not cry, we started joking, *ça vaut mieux*," she said. "If we cry we call war on us." Marguerite is a peasant woman from Lorraine. She knows all about war — was evacuated to Belgium in the last one. But she has two sons. Somehow I have a bad conscience toward her. Why could not we who know what it is all about make a world where old, rather stupid women would not have to suffer two wars in one lifetime? I collect Ed's manuscripts, books, etc., to take out to the Forest of Marly. While I am doing so Alex (Alex Small, *Chicago Tribune* correspondent on assignment in Poland) calls from Warsaw. He says for Ed to call him at six. It will be the last chance, he says, German troops are already on Polish soil. . . . On the strength of that I also pack a few clothes, rugs, etc., and drive them out to Marly.'

August 27

'This seemed like a relatively dull day . . . but in the evening the rhythm quickens again with the announcement that Hitler has answered Daladier and refuses to negotiate directly with the Poles. . . . For me this is one of the worst evenings yet, the darkness of the blacked-out streets and the difficulty of driving through traffic with headlights blinding you and invisible pedes-

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trians getting in one's way puts one on edge. Late in the evening I evacuated Joanne and her baby with the Peugeot. Her husband, Wave, and I tie the baby carriage on to the roof while the concierge stands in the doorway smiling patronizingly and saying, "Don't worry; nothing is going to happen." The neon lights in the Montmartre night clubs look rather sinister in the environing gloom.... The Gare de Lyon is a whirlpool of families being evacuated to the country, departing reservists, and insulted-looking Sunday fishermen... No sign of panic on people's faces, though God knows, the noise, the surging crowd, the sharp whistles of the train made me feel slightly hysterical.... Our planned good and quiet dinner turned out to be a cheerless snack at the Café de la Paix, after midnight. Cadet (correspondent of the *London Times*) and Sanford joined us and conversation rolled with masculine boisterousness on just how severe the imminent bombardments would be, how they would affect us, what would be the most suitable clothes for a war correspondent — overalls, we decided. The streets are empty now and look gloomy and untidy. I feel awful. Antoinette, who naturally has the blues, spends the night on the divan, Genia in the guest room.'

*August 30*

'Had dinner with Dell, Scott, Bourdin, etc., at the Printania. Lots of banter and joking and Dell crowing out his World War stories, descriptions by Bourdin of the effects of the Big Bertha suddenly cured my war jitters and the fear of bombardments I had been in ever since it was decided that the press would stay in Paris. I had decided to stay too, but very much afraid I would not be able to take it. That's over now; the prospect of being bombarded has, lost that apocalyptic, end-of-the-world and

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certain-death appearance. It dawned on me that one might very well live in Paris for several months, even all through the war, and survive. After all, not so many planes would be able to pass. After all, there was at least half an hour to get under cover and some *métros* were several floors deep. . . . If others could take it so could I.'

This was how it felt to live through a European crisis, how it felt to a foreigner without nerve-roots embedded in the soil of the countries and exceptional facilities for escape. For Europeans with sons, husbands, homes, and business caught in the crisis, the strain was more cruel. And it was not our first major crisis but our third within less than a year. The May crisis never got quite so tense, but the September one, before Munich, was worse.

Is it any wonder that men revolted against Hitler, and God, and such a peace? Is it any wonder that men all over Europe — for men in England and Germany and Italy and all the other countries had the same feelings — thought that such a life was impossible?

Later Premier Daladier in public speeches expressed in powerful and moving language the conviction of his whole people that peace under such conditions could not go on, that human nerves could not stand more mobilizations, more evacuations, more crises. This was the one clear war-aim on which the whole French people were united: to win at least a few years that men could call certain.

Yet how, every Frenchman asked, could you ever be certain of anything with Hitler, who had broken every pledge he had given, who was never satisfied, who would never let you rest?

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They did not care about his broken pledges as such, they thought about their own broken nights and their broken lives.

Rightly or wrongly, this was the state of mind of the peoples of the West at the end of August, 1939. How they had come to this state of mind, with what justice, I will try to show later. It is enough now to establish this first pathological finding: that the war of nerves had not broken the will-to-resist of the western peoples, but had broken their will-to-peace.

# III

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IN ORDER to understand what this war is in the minds of the men who are fighting it or enduring it, what it means to them as humans, it is necessary to turn backward from the formal outbreak and trace its slow development in consciousness. Psychologically, its origins were in the crisis over Czechoslovakia during the months of August, September, and early October, 1938, which in the popular mind changed Munich from the capital city of Bavaria into a six-letter word meaning a shameful capitulation imposed by negotiation. The relationship between the crisis of 1938 and the crisis of 1939 was not accidental but fatal, an historical pattern repeating itself in its opposite, following a destiny. In one sense the war may be said to have started at Munich; in another it could be said that it had been going on for a long time and was discovered at Munich, where the statesmen of the West had gone thinking they were going to save peace. In any case the crisis over Czechoslovakia produced a new political conception which soon grew hazy around the edges and turned into a political myth: the war of nerves. And the war of nerves of 1938 grew inevitably and directly into the war, which has yet to be given a name, of 1939.

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After all the ink which has been spilled over Munich there is no use taking up again the familiar discussion of the political and strategical factors of the problem. The important thing for my purpose is how the 1938 crisis and Munich altered European attitudes toward war and peace, for in my opinion the alteration was decisive.

In the spring of 1938, even after the *Anschluss*, peace was still identified in the minds of most people in western Europe with the order created by the Peace of Versailles. Despite the growing fear that Hitler's Germany inspired, many liberals, especially in England, continued to preach the necessity of pacific revision of frontiers, but even they took for granted the Versailles map of Europe, in its broad lines. Revision of frontiers was one thing, suppression of them another. Conservatives everywhere, naturally more in France than anywhere else, looked on territorial revisionism as a Pandora's box from which war was virtually certain to fly out if it were ever opened. The civil war in Spain — that is, the Russo-Italo-German intervention in it — was felt to be dangerous, the remilitarization of the Rhineland was dangerous, the dynamism of the régimes in Italy and Germany was dangerous; but none of these things were thought fatal to peace as long as the map of Europe — once the *Anschluss* had been swallowed — remained intact.

Similarly, from the discredited League of Nations, which had also been born at Versailles, there remained a nuclear or sedimentary doctrine of collective security which in final analysis boiled down to the French and British system of alliances. Aggression outside of Europe or even outside the Franco-British system of alliances could be winked at, but aggression against a member of the system was still felt to be a serious thing, and what is more,



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thought of in the same moral terms in which the founders of the League had thought of aggression in general. In other words, the average Frenchman or Englishman, however much he might scoff at the League, still thought of aggressions committed against his own allies as acts of international outlawry, and was in principle prepared to deal with them as such.

Czechoslovakia was France's sworn and most faithful ally, and France was England's ally. That alone sufficed to render any conflict between Germany and Czechoslovakia at least indirectly a conflict between the western democracies and Germany. Actually when the crisis developed it was a struggle between England and France on one side and Germany on the other, with Czechoslovakia figuring rather as a battlefield than as a belligerent.

Some people would not believe this was so, and others asked why must it be so; why must France feel menaced because Germany seizes a fortress in central Europe? Often during the summer of 1938 as the crisis was growing I heard the argument develop in this way, but it was one of those unreal, unanswerable arguments. It was as unreal and unanswerable as the French argument that Germany had no reason to feel encircled every time the French made an alliance. Men might argue as much as they liked, but the fact was that all Germans did feel encircled by the French alliances and all Frenchmen did feel menaced by German expansion in any direction. Both sentiments were justified because they had a common foundation in a semi-conscious myth subscribed to by both peoples and preserved in their national institutions: that Germany and France were 'natural' rivals and, being so, neither could tolerate the other's unlimited expansion. It was taken for granted in France that if

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Germany ever became strong enough to crush France she would do so, and taken for granted in Germany, as Hitler himself made perfectly clear, that in order to become really strong it would be necessary to crush France. This was the psychological heritage of pre-war Europe and its chessboard diplomacy, and it was still vigorous in 1938. A new psychology had been superimposed upon the old, without destroying it. This psychology, reposing on the myth of an international society yet to be created, condemned expansion by violence as a crime against the society of nations, metaphorically assimilating war with murder. France had officially accepted this psychology, which would have dissipated the phobia of aggressive German expansion if Germany had accepted it too, but Germany since Hitler had officially repudiated it. Hence the atavistic distrust of Germany as a dangerous neighbor and the more modern and reasonable disapproval of aggression as such flowed together in the French mind.

At the moment that the crisis over Czechoslovakia began to take shape, however, there were several other things flowing in the French mind as well, also in the minds of people in other democratic countries, and the maelstrom of these conflicting currents eventually made Munich what it was, establishing a new destiny for Europe. The most important thing which happened is this: the conflict of governments over Czechoslovakia got tangled up with an ideological battle then raging throughout the whole civilized world, a quarrel between two great political religions in Europe, each comprising numerous sects. One carried the banner 'Democracy,' the other 'Occidental Civilization.' Fundamentally there was no conflict between the two slogans, since neither meant anything concrete. Each one, how-

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ever, served as the common bond between a number of discordant faiths polarized by the two extreme sects, Communists and Fascists, which it turned out later cared nothing respectively for either democracy or occidental civilization. The dividing line between the two religious groups was the civil war in Spain, and to a lesser degree the late Popular Front régime in France.

This was converted by rival propagandas into a symbolic class struggle, rendered acute by the economic situation in the world. The general decadence of social institutions had become by the spring of 1938 very real and passionate to nearly everyone in Europe who took any interest at all in politics, and to many even who did not. It had reached the stage of intensity where neutrality becomes almost impossible. No matter what particular sect you belonged to, you were dragged into one camp or the other and found yourself sharing enthusiasms and prejudices with men who really were more alien to you than most of the enemy.

If you were a self-conscious democrat you became automatically a supporter of the Spanish loyalists and an apologist of communism. If you were a Swiss banker in Basel or an Irish policeman in New York, you became just as automatically a supporter of Franco, an apologist of Naziism and fascism, and if not an anti-Semite at least an apologist of anti-Semitism.

Some day, no doubt, it will be brought to light that propagandists in Moscow and Berlin spent millions of dollars and thousands of kilowatts of psychic energy nourishing this religious controversy for very old-fashioned ends. In fact abundant and precise evidence already exists. However, this is of secondary interest. Once the conflict broke out — and it was determined by forces much deeper than German or Russian propaganda — it did not require great skill or occult devices to exploit it for

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propaganda purposes. It sufficed for Russia and Germany to pose as champions of rival causes, more noisily than any other champions, to acquire automatically the sympathies and gain control in a degree over the consciences of all attached to those causes.

The rest follows according to a basic law of psychology, whereby whenever a representation acquires a sufficient affective charge it charges all the representations associated with it, creating a vast complex. The more powerful the emotion, the wider the ring of associations included in the complex. In 1918 in America hatred of Germany became so strong that sauerkraut had to be called liberty cabbage before it could be eaten. In 1938 hatred of communism became so strong that it begot anti-Semitism because anti-Semitism was associated through Hitler with anti-communism. It did not require great talent or effort to convince an anti-Communist that Jews were allies of Communists. In an emotional situation of this sort propaganda becomes childishly easy. For one thing, you can find honest people who will take money from you to make propaganda for you when their ideal is the same as yours. They do not consider they are being bought in such circumstances. Usually they do not have to be paid. They will spread your propaganda because they believe it to be news or truth. Patriots will attack their own government because they think the foreign government which is not an enemy to them has the true interests of the patriots' land more at heart than their own government, or simply, in their excitement, forget that the slogans have a foreign source.

This may seem exaggerated, but it is exactly what happened in Europe in 1938, and more particularly in France, where the conflict was most acute, the French having, in addition to local

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causes, a national talent for feeling religious about any quarrel with other Frenchmen.

It was inevitable that any differences of opinion arising within the democracies over the policy to follow in regard to the German menace against Czechoslovakia should become part of the controversy between the 'occidentals' and the democrats. When circumstances promoted the Czech problem to the first place in the world's preoccupations, Czechoslovakia almost displaced Spain as the principal ideological battlefield. Resistance to Germany under any conditions was an article of faith in the anti-fascist, democratic church. Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, was considered a particularly meritorious democracy, and the Czech president, Doctor Eduard Benes, had for years been one of the most prominent actors on the Geneva scene. Nothing more natural, then, that all the friends of loyalist Spain, of the League of Nations, and of Soviet Russia should rally to the defense of Czechoslovakia. As usual when emotional issues of great importance are involved, they did not inquire too closely into the merits of the particular dispute over the treatment of the Sudeten Germans which was the official cause of the conflict; since the Czechs belonged to the right church, it was more or less taken for granted that their cause must be just and their conduct blameless.

Having the wrong friends and belonging to the wrong church was, on the other hand, enough to damn the Czechs in the eyes of all the true defenders of occidental civilization. But there was a much more specific political factor involved. It was obvious that encouraging the Czechs to resist Hitler's demands involved a risk of war. Many well-informed persons in Europe thought it meant the certainty of war, if not immediately, then

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sooner or later. The great business interests of Europe, the *internationale* of finance whose Kremlin is the City of London, did not want war, for business reasons. In the general staffs and the chancelleries there were influential groups who did not want war in 1938 because England and France were not ready for it. To avoid being forced or dragged into war over Czechoslovakia, the powers of finance and their associates in the governments launched a great propaganda campaign of 'appeasement,' counteracting the propaganda of the anti-fascist ideologues.

From then on all the fat was in the fire. All the passion of the controversy over Spain was siphoned into the controversy over war or peace in Europe, and the positions taken acquired a religious significance in the eyes of those who were carrying it on. Furthermore, while the battle of democracy versus the occident had always been a pretty artificial one, a really fundamental issue was now involved, having an authentic emotional significance for every man, woman, and child in Europe, an issue which the simplest mind could understand. The consequences of this transposition of the quarrel were incalculable, for France and for the world. One man in Europe, probably, was penetrating enough to foresee the psychic earthquake resulting from this situation. That man was Hitler, who had no doubt worked deliberately, in so far as he was able, to prepare it. I do not think anyone else realized what really was at stake, not even the fanatical ideologues on one side nor the cynical appeasers on the other; certainly not the British and French Governments, in any case.

It is still too early to establish clearly the rôles of the British and French cabinets and the individual ministers who composed them, to determine the exact relations between politics and

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international finance in the Czech drama. Thanks, however, to the war which has at least momentarily suppressed the quarrels of the political churches in France and England, it is apparent today that many of the extreme views which prevailed immediately after Munich were unsound. For instance, the suspicion that the German position was nothing but a bluff hardly seems justified in the light of later events. Likewise the belief in Hitler's complete sincerity. Likewise the legend that the Bonnets and the Chamberlains from sheer cowardice justified capitulation on the ground that it was preferable to military defeat, whereas the French and British general staffs had guaranteed victory. Actually the French General Staff, as I definitely established later, was divided. In the upper ranks of the military hierarchy one group, counting chiefly on economic factors, believed that Germany could be defeated within a few months. The opposing group, consisting mainly of the aviation enthusiasts, thought that the French and Czech armies would be annihilated by the German air force before the economic factor could play any rôle. Hence there was a military as well as a sentimental case for capitulation. Moreover, from a strategic point of view the *Anschluss* had converted the Bohemian bastion from an asset into a liability. It was like an exposed salient which costs more to hold than it is worth.

Thus it seems today that even the moderate critics of Munich committed a certain number of injustices toward the men in England and France who were responsible for it. On the other hand, the anti-Munich forces were right in denouncing certain of the appeasement tactics. It has been insinuated that several British and French ministers, Georges Bonnet notably, sabotaged **their own** policies by secretly inspiring the press to follow a

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diametrically opposite policy. This is a rather extreme statement of the case. It seemed to me that the British and French Governments, particularly the latter, had allowed themselves to get involved in one of those neurotic conflicts to which parliamentary democracies are so prone. Their ideology forced them to take a public position which they were not prepared to support in practice. When on July 18 Daladier publicly affirmed France's determination to honor her treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia should the need arise, I imagine that he hoped by taking this position to forestall a German *fait accompli* which this time would be a *casus belli*. In this he succeeded, but he did not succeed in diminishing the German pressure on Czechoslovakia because Hitler knew what Daladier really felt about fighting a war for the Czechs. Yet the position had been taken and could not be repudiated, therefore it had to be annulled in action. Many times at Geneva I had witnessed such dualism in policy, due to the conflict between ideology and reality; in fact the League had died of this malady, and democracy everywhere was pretty sick from it. In the crisis over Czechoslovakia the French and British Governments found themselves in almost the same position with regard to Germany that they had been in with regard to Italy during the Abyssinian War, except that their respective rôles were reversed. Just as in the first case I do not think Pierre Laval's effective sabotage of sanctions was as unwelcome to the British as generally believed, so in this case I do not think that the gap between London and Paris or between the partisans of firmness and the partisans of appeasement inside the French cabinet was as great as it seemed, at least in the beginning.

The situation called for a villain, and Bonnet by his position



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was obviously designated for the rôle. It is quite possible he overplayed the rôle — personally I believe he did — but there is no doubt that the rôle called for a certain amount of moral sabotage.

At first it took a mild form. From early in the spring I had noticed a sort of whispering campaign of optimism, the more remarkable because in most informed quarters the European situation after the *Anschluss* was thought to be pretty black. In all the European capitals one ran into seemingly well-informed persons who surprisingly turned out to be staunch optimists. They not only affirmed they did not believe in the danger of war, but affirmed it with a particularly knowing air, like someone on the inside of the stock market — many of them were, in fact. I particularly recall a luncheon at the Savage Club in London in the month of May with a well-informed Britisher who I knew was close to the so-called Cliveden set.

‘No, there will be no war this year,’ he said, helping himself to a generous portion of Stilton in the club’s sedate dining-room, ‘not this year; but next year is a different story.’

This strange, knowing optimism in certain circles persisted throughout the summer and seemed to grow rather more categorical as the outward signs of tension increased in Europe. When the winds of panic began to blow in earnest, the knowing ones were more sure than ever that they were right.

‘The situation will have to get worse before it can get better,’ they would add mysteriously.

At first the press in France and England seemed to share in a more sober vein the optimism of the knowing ones. For more than a fortnight it reported with extraordinary equanimity certain seasonal military maneuvers which had started in Ger-

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many around August 1, involving a mere million and a half men, many of whom, oddly enough, appeared to be maneuvering near the Czech frontier. Then the tone of the press suddenly changed (more on this later). From time to time, however, strange things turned up in the semi-official organs like *Le Temps* or *The Times*, which seemed to justify the optimism of the knowing ones. The outstanding case was the famous *Times* editorial recommending the outright cession of the Sudeten regions to Germany, a thesis which was diametrically opposed to the official French and even British position at that moment — so much so that the editorial was repudiated by the Foreign Office.

To a foreign correspondent like myself, hovering on the fringes of officialdom, the whole business seemed almost at times like an hallucination. Sometimes in Paris you would hear a minister or a high official interpret official French policy and on the way out of his office run into a man generally considered as the minister's confidant who would tell you that French policy was exactly the opposite.

The result of this duality was to open the French press to the private propaganda of unscrupulous politicians intriguing against the Government and even to German and Italian agents, of whom there were hundreds in France, some in key positions. Once ministers and officials began winking when they outlined official policy there was no danger for a paper or an individual writer, or for salon whisperers or café orators to go the whole hog in opposing the official policy, and when you had gone the whole hog, by the logic of things your French counter-policy became almost indistinguishable from German policy.

If you bear in mind this demoralizing license at a moment when public opinion was already demoralized and wildly confused by

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ideological quarrels, and when French policy in the Czech crisis had become an issue in the principal ideological quarrel of the day, you will not find it hard to understand the upheavals which ensued. France split into two fanatical Frances, swept along to more and more extreme positions by their fanaticism. There was a peace party and a war party. Each claimed champions in the cabinet and denounced enemies. This minister was a patriot, that one a traitor or a sinister demon trying to push the country into war. In the eyes of the peace party anyone who expressed any sympathy for the Czechs was *ipso facto* a 'bellicist.' A newspaper reporter or a radio speaker who brought unwelcome tidings was a war-monger or he would not reveal such things. Toward the end it was almost enough to express any confidence in the French army to be denounced as a war-monger.

Conversely, anyone who called attention to the disadvantages of war or suggested that the Government of Prague might have some share of responsibility for the Sudeten mess became automatically, if not a traitor, an unconscious Fascist, a tool of the trusts, or simply a coward.

The new controversy not only cut normal party lines, but opened lateral fissures in the previous ideological lineup. On the Left certain Socialist and Syndicalist elements broke the proletarian front with the Communists because of the super-bellicist position ordered by Moscow. On the Right the old-fashioned die-hard nationalists, who naturally had to be for resistance to Germany in any circumstances, broke with their pro-fascist allies, who had to be against Czechoslovakia in any circumstances.

In the Center the Radical Socialist Party of Daladier and Bonnet likewise broke in two, perhaps because it was the party

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of Daladier and Bonnet. Curiously, the moguls of the Grand Orient, the Masonic lodges, traditional enemies of reaction and clericalism, swung their influence to the side of appeasement, although Czechoslovakia in the eyes of all the latter-day adepts of Mrs. Webster was even more than France the Masonic horror-house of Europe, and although the hereditary enemy, the Jesuits, and other forces of darkness were likewise working for appeasement, to say nothing of Christian Scientists, Buchmanites, and the Aga Khan.

Even the trusts themselves were split. Heavy industry in France, at least, remained moderately patriotic through fixed associations of ideas and because war has its compensations for those engaged in this line of business. Credit, however — banks, insurance, etc. — was solidly for appeasement.

With all other groups divided, the Jews naturally were, too. Jewish Communists were bellicists, Jewish bankers were for appeasement. Jews in between, like all other Frenchmen in between, followed the opinion prevailing in the socio-economic bracket where they belonged — a curious thing about this crisis was that it swallowed up all individual opinions, society having curdled. In so far as there was any specifically Jewish reaction to the situation, it was a preoccupation with the question of honor involved, since Jewish honor, unlike Aryan honor, has a concrete basis in fidelity to the pledged word, the result of innumerable transactions with a God who drove hard bargains and kept to them. Divided though they were in fact, the Jews were mystically united in the minds of the peace party, and were naturally placed in the ranks of the war-mongers. In fact to the more enthusiastic Frenchmen of the Right, the whole thing was a Jewish plot to destroy Christian civilization.

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German agents naturally did everything possible to foster the already sturdy anti-Semitic movement in France, knowing from experience the peculiar effectiveness of anti-Semitism as a social dissolvent. Not content with the more subtle means of propaganda, supporting indigenous anti-Semitic organs with encouragement, ideas, examples, and funds, they began in the climactic days of the crisis to litter the streets of Paris with violent leaflets printed in Germany. In Alsace, where Nazi propaganda was the most active and had the best foundation to work on, small pogroms broke out, Jews were molested in the streets, Jewish shops were smashed and looted by mobs shouting 'Down with the Jewish war.' In Paris after Daladier's return from Munich when he went to offer his thanks — or excuses — to the Unknown Soldier, I saw little bands of ruffians in the Champs-Élysées trying with moderate success to convert the ceremony into an anti-Semitic demonstration.

Something of the tone of the press in the days when France was trying to mobilize her army and even the optimists were beginning to waver a little about the certainty of peace can be gathered from the following excerpts:

A war about which nine-tenths of the French people understand exactly nothing. — *Action Française* (Royalist), September 15.

If the cannibals are determined  
To make heroes of us,  
Then our first bullets must be  
For Mandel, Blum and Reynaud.

(Parody on the *Internationale* published by *Action Française*, September 29.)

So it is not even a question of war for Czechoslovakia any more. Not even war for three Czech cantons. It's war for the livestock

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of three Czech cantons. — *Je Suis Partout* (Royalist-Fascist), September 30.

The reservists went off without complaint... but unlike their fathers in 1914 they don't understand... The dominant sentiment is stupefaction. It is for an affair in which France is not directly concerned and which is already three-fourths settled; it's for a quarrel among Central European races that they are obliged to leave their homes, wives, and jobs. — Stéphane Lauzanne in *Le Matin*, September 25.

Frenchmen are accustomed to taking the ravings of papers like *L'Action Française* and *Je Suis Partout* with a grain of salt, but *Le Matin* is something quite different. It is a paper with a great circulation, a news paper and not just an organ of opinion, and above all a traditionally jingo paper. Lauzanne himself is one of the most prominent journalists in France, who beat the war-drums more loudly than anyone from 1914 to 1918 and is doing so again today.

An even more remarkable symptom of disarray and social decomposition was the strange phobia of *les fausses nouvelles* which spread through France at the height of the crisis. Partly it was a clever propaganda trick to shatter whatever remained of morale in the country and swell the tide of defeatism which finally swept the Government off its not-too-reluctant feet. Partly it was a sincere belief that unseen and diabolical forces were trying to provoke war by spreading sensational lies. Partly it had a basis of truth in the misleading propaganda which the other camp and certain governments were putting out. At all events the phobia rapidly attained a pathological intensity and helped to confuse the public mind still further.

The outstanding example of the false-news phobia was the

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reaction in France to a communiqué issued to the press by the British Foreign Office on September 26. By this time even appeasement circles in England were worried about developments in France; the defeatist movement they had helped to launch was getting out of hand. Therefore the communiqué was issued with the double purpose of quieting the French and warning the Germans that retreat had reached its limits. The essential passage of the communiqué read as follows:

If in spite of all efforts made by the British prime minister, a German attack is made upon Czechoslovakia, the immediate result must be that France will be bound to come to her assistance and Great Britain and Russia will certainly stand by France.

Here is how the French press reacted to this encouragement from an ally:

Lies. Lies. For the last month the country has been stuffed with lies, big and little, clever and crude. A clever lie, the so-called *communiqué* of the Foreign Office. — *Le Matin*.

A new telegram from Ems? — *La République*.

Nothing more unusual and suspicious. — *Le Jour*.

This message was intended to touch off the powder-barrel. — *La Liberté* (organ of Jacques Doriot).

Even after Munich the phobia persisted and a small witch-hunt got under way to punish the sinister characters who had been plotting against peace. Blacklists of war-mongers were published by the fascist press and a few journalists and administrative heads fell, including that of Pierre Comert, who had been press chief at the Quai d'Orsay during the crisis. Looking back on it from this distance the whole affair appears as a collective psychosis, not as a reasonable dispute in which one side was

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more or less right and the other side more or less wrong. From a purely French point of view I suppose that the partisans of resistance did as much damage to the country's morale as the 'defeatists.' Certainly after Munich they did more harm by their accusations and recriminations, however sound. And even during the crisis they played into Hitler's hands as much as the defeatists did. Both parties were equally the victims of an emotional stampede they could not control. Even the army appears to have been touched by the psychosis, judging from the bitter attack in Pertinax's *L'Europe Nouvelle*, organ of one group in the army, on General Vuillemin, head of the French air force, who had come back from a trip to Germany in July with an impressive report on the strength of German aviation.

It was not, however, just a case of the French quarreling among themselves again. Another factor aggravated the collapse of morale. Earlier in this chapter I mentioned that the tone of the French press had changed abruptly in the latter part of August. Some months after Munich Jean Galtier-Boissière, a Left-wing pacifist who has made almost a profession of analyzing the French press and an unrepentant apologist of Munich, published the following illuminating comparison between the tone of the French bourgeois press in 1914 and 1938:

In 1914 the press, though it informed the public of the menace hanging over Europe, feigned not to believe in the impending massacre and maintained a tone of serenity.

In 1938 the papers, while continuing their customary coverage of races, sports, the theaters, and crime, deliberately played up the war scare on the front pages with four- or eight-column heads. Not only did the press not hide the danger but it even had a tendency to exaggerate it.

By sensational banners, by anguishing question-marks, by



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changing heads between editions,<sup>\*</sup> by the scientific alternation of crises and lulls, the newsprint merchants played mercilessly on the nerves of the population, to such a degree that to some people a conflagration would have become almost a relief. How many times have I not heard 'Better war than this uncertainty.'

This impression of the tone of the French press during the pre-Munich crisis corresponds exactly with my own. (In passing, it is interesting to note that Galtier-Boissière attributes to the French press itself the Hitlerian technique which later was considered a typical form of the war of nerves.) The reason for the alarmist campaign is obvious — to terrify the French people into accepting any compromise rather than war. But why should that have been necessary if the governments, as I have several times hinted, were more or less resigned to making a compromise over Czechoslovakia, if not giving it up altogether?

For one thing, the lords of the press may have been trying to force the Government's hand and they were definitely playing a game of internal politics — not on behalf of the government of the day, still tainted with something of the *Front Populaire* spirit. More than that, however, it seems probable that instead of any very precise plan for withdrawing from central Europe the French and British Governments merely had a pessimistic or defeatist sentiment about central Europe. When it came to translating this negative feeling into positive diplomatic action, London and Paris were not in complete agreement and within the two cabinets, especially the French, certain ministers were paralyzed by their own ideologies. They could not openly take position in favor of drastic concessions by Czechoslovakia, nor

<sup>\*</sup> All evidences of exceptional stress in French journalistic tradition. — *The Author.*

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even bring direct diplomatic pressure to bear in Prague without appearing as traitors to their own public personalities, but they could bow to the will of the nation.

Whether this view is correct or not, the fact remains that the alarmism of the French and British press was not curbed, though means to curb it existed both in France and England. Not only was the imminence of war played up by the defeatist papers, but the horrors of this war were graphically depicted. The terrifying might of Germany's air fleet was particularly stressed, and it even seemed that some of the air-raid precautions taken in Paris and London were primarily intended to frighten the public.

Thanks to the co-operation of the press, Hitler was able to exploit to the maximum the trusted moral weapon of terrorism, poisoning the French people with their own nightmares. The fear which planted itself in the soul of France and spread like a monstrous cancer, devouring all other emotional faculties, was an irrational fear and therefore the more uncontrollable. It was the panic of retreat which comes over troops that have been broken in battle and are being pursued; terror is on them not because danger is so near but because they are running and safety is so near. The Czech people, which had never withstood a Verdun and never won a Marne, remained unshaken in the face of imminent annihilation because they did not run and had in fact no place to run to. Hitler, who had studied the soul of France on the battlefields of France, knew it was a military soul and could only be shaken in retreat. Pressed too hard, the French would have turned and counter-attacked, like indignant lions. Hitler knew that, so the menace of the German air force was never flung brutally and unabashed in the faces of the French as it was in the faces of the Czechs, but remained subtly implicit.

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Every reasonable and seemingly honorable inducement to retreat was offered.

Whenever it seemed that the French people were resigned to war and ready to meet it, some suggestion of compromise, some ray of hope would come over the news wires from Berlin. Every possible dramatic device was used to defer the climax without lowering suspense. Never in modern history had the nerves of a whole nation, of several nations, been subjected to such dreadful strain. Some wag, perhaps myself, remarked toward the end of September that it was not the worst international crisis since August, 1914, because the 1914 crisis had never been that bad.

It is no wonder that in the end the nerves of even the sanest and bravest men were beginning to crack and sheer animal fear ran riot. I shall never forget sitting in a café on the Champs-Élysées the afternoon that Daladier's departure for Munich was announced, knowing that there was going to be Munich, and suddenly becoming aware of the drawn, hysterical faces of all the other people in the café, the ones who did not know yet about Munich. I suppose a quarter of an hour earlier my face also had been drawn and hysterical.

It was because of this fear that even the bravest felt on the eve of Munich, because of the shameless relief which even the most intransigent could not wholly suppress after Munich, that Munich was for France a moral Caporetto. Just as Mussolini would not have been possible without Caporetto, so the war of 1939 would not have been possible without the shame and humiliation which Munich was in the eyes of Frenchmen, even the Frenchmen who had worked the most to bring it about.

To understand why the defeat of Munich was for the French such a grave one, it is necessary to make an effort of the imagina-

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tion. Imagine that at the battle of Verdun the French General Staff had concluded that the cost of holding the position was too great to justify the attempt, but had been ordered by the Government to do so, for reasons of morale. Imagine the generals quarreling among themselves and with the Government as to whether the order should be obeyed. Imagine them ordering the troops to hold their positions at any cost, then secretly sabotaging their own orders by passing the word along that the situations were untenable. Imagine them falsifying communiqués, exaggerating losses, to influence public opinion against the Government. Imagine the Government yielding, ordering a retreat provided it was carried out gradually and with dignity. Imagine some of the troops refusing to retreat, even on orders, others throwing down their rifles and running, or fraternizing openly with the enemy. Imagine the enemy converting the retreat into a rout and taking Verdun without a battle. Finally imagine the censorship abolished and the affair being thrashed out publicly and in anger, with the partisans of withdrawal celebrating the victory of the enemy in the streets of Paris.

After Munich France as a nation seemed to be stricken with something like collective locomotor ataxia; she was visibly throwing out from the knees. Defeatism, demobilized like the army, put on civilian clothes and entered into every phase of life. Workers limited their efforts to punching time-clocks, collecting their pay, and planning strikes for fewer hours to loaf in and higher salaries. Their employers reacted by denouncing the worthlessness of the proletariat to dancing-girls in Montmartre night clubs, and stretching their week-ends out over most of the week. Being dissatisfied with themselves, all Frenchmen were dissatisfied and disgusted with the way other Frenchmen were

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acting and told them so, filling the press with bitter, sterile polemics.

Even the cynical faith in appeasement was too much of a moral effort for the average French bourgeois; he was content to congratulate himself for having had enough sense not to die for the Czechs and was determined that henceforth he would not die for anything, if he could help it. There was a great revulsion against nationalism, internationalism, patriotism, or any other ideals which involved danger. It was the golden age of the *petits mustes réalistes* — realistic young cads — denounced by Georges Bernanos, the gilded youths who had grown hard in the heart and soft in the tripe. More than ever they were enthusiastic for Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco, but their enthusiasm expressed itself by applauding from a safe distance every time one of these paladins kicked a prostrate foe in the face.

The workers, who had remained relatively healthy during the crisis, stoically preparing to fulfill their destiny as cannon-fodder and often when they were Communists marching off with a song, thought all this was just so much bourgeois rotteness, thought Munich was a bourgeois shame, and began to dream of *le grand soir* when all rotteness would be swept away. They at least were capable of honest indignation when German school-boys, obeying orders from their leaders, kicked aged Jews to death in front of their wives and children. Readers of the French bourgeois press were not; Georges Bonnet was not, or at least his indignation did not prevent him from shaking hands with von Ribbentrop while the screams of the old Jews with the crushed ribs were still ringing in everyone's ears, did not prevent him from signing a pact of good neighborhood with Ribbentrop and even, it seems, from giving him some encouragement, how-

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ever tacit, for further German expansion toward the east. Even Jules Romains, flower of French intellectual humanism, was not too indignant to sit down to table with the good neighbors from across the Rhine.

Yes, the workers had retained their indignation and their self-respect — except as regards their work — and even their pity. They were glad like the bourgeois to be alive, but they could still feel some sympathy with the Czechs, who were not so happy to be alive after their national castration. They did not join in the deluge of abject abuse poured on the fallen Czechs and their leaders by the bourgeois partisans of Munich, the tribe of the *Munichois*. (The weekly paper *Je Suis Partout*, favorite organ of the *petits musfles réalistes*, went so far as to propose confiscating Czech funds in France to compensate French citizens for the financial losses they had suffered by being mobilized.)

Yet, though they had not followed the bourgeoisie into the abyss of moral abjectness, the workers had become almost as resolutely defeatist in regard to the political problems of Europe. They were determined at least that they would not be mobilized again to fight a bourgeois war. It was not so much the Communists who gained adherents and hearts as the more extreme revolutionary parties, the parties of social necrosis, Trotskyists, anarchists, etc. Anarchist literature and philosophy enjoyed a definite vogue.

Perhaps one of the gravest consequences of Munich was the fissure which it opened or at least deepened in the ranks of the pacifists, and the extreme tendencies both groups developed after the schism. Believers in peace through collective security, in international organization like that attempted at Geneva, necessarily became tinged with bellicism and developed an uncon-

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scious thirst for vengeance. If they thought of consequences at all, they could not fail to see the bitter paradox that their peace could only be achieved by a war.

The absolute pacifists, the mystics of non-violence, just as necessarily became tinged with defeatism, and their defeatism led to the paradox, no less bitter, that violence could only be averted by condoning violence. The pacifist schism was world-wide, but its consequences were particularly grave in France and its manifestations characteristically extreme.

In the post-war years of growing disillusion over the downfall of the League and the twilight of democracy, pacifism had come to seem something laughable and pathetic. What could a few score overearnest middle-aged women brandishing petitions accomplish against the forces of aggression? It was only when you had lived through a major European crisis as I did, seen written on the faces of men the horror and loathing of war, of any war, even the most necessary one, felt the tremendous, instinctive force of this horror, that you realized pacifists were not laughable figures since they had made the horror of war articulate in the masses, shaped it and kept it alive. Now the pacifists were having a war among themselves, and peace in consequence was very sick. In one way or another the pacifists from now on were helping to make war inevitable, and those who helped the most, it seems to me, were the ones who tried to avert violence by condoning violence, thereby fatally raising two violences. They had not understood that blind emotion is always destructive when followed blindly to the end, that peoples can be swept into war by screaming peace at the wrong time, that helplessness can be criminally provocative, and that all the lambs of this world have the sins of all the lions on their consciences.

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This leads directly to another grave consequence of Munich. The crisis, the fear of war, had disintoxicated the German people, exploded all the sanguinary myths the Nazis had been trying to build up for years, brought them almost to the verge of revolt. Munich vindicated Hitler, justified the régime, resurrected the myth of an aggression painless to the aggressor. I did not visit Germany after Munich, but early in November I was in Budapest, and I remember vividly a conversation with an intelligent young Hungarian Nazi.

‘The democracies are finished,’ he said. ‘They cannot fight us with our own weapons. Material strength doesn’t matter. The thing that counts is the conception of their use. The democratic conception of war is old-fashioned. The fascist conception is modern, it is an expression of the whole spirit of fascist civilization. It is invincible because the enemies of the fascist ideal have no defense against it. Our whole existence is a combat, every day, war or peace. We are always making war on the enemy, but he cannot make war on us without declaring it, mobilizing, etc. We will never give him the chance. Our wars are won before they start.’

This, I learned later, was the new doctrine in Berlin, the new joyous dream that German youth was being taught. Thanks to the same magical technique which had won the battle of Munich without firing a shot, the Nazi slogan, ‘Tomorrow the world will be ours,’ was on the way to realization.

Munich, I think, was really not so much a triumph for the war of nerves as the genesis of the war of nerves. Since the beginning the Nazis had counted heavily on propaganda and the social decomposition of the enemy by the attack from within. I do not think, however, that until Munich they really believed



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that bloodless wars could be won by these psychological techniques. In a sense I think they were the victims of a kind of optical illusion. The success of the war of nerves against France had come chiefly from the fact that the French press and to some degree the French Government were helping Hitler wage it against the French people. Not realizing that this was due more to peculiar circumstances than to their own efforts, the Nazis naturally reasoned that what had worked so well once would work even better the next time, when the method had been improved.

Arriving late in November in Rome, I found these ideas had already seeped down along the Axis and were enthusiastically embraced by the more militant Fascists. With characteristic boisterousness young black-shirts were going around proclaiming that Italy, too, was to collect a slice of the world of tomorrow, and by the same methods.

'You see,' I was told, 'within a year, by the end of 1939, Germany will have Alsace-Lorraine back and we will have Tunisia, maybe Corsica. Without a war. The French won't fight. They are finished. Why, tomorrow there is to be a general strike in Paris. That is the beginning of the end. There will be civil war in France and we shall pick up the pieces.'

From the same young Italian who made this little speech to me I learned indirectly that members of the Fascist Party had been summoned to turn out in the streets next day for a spontaneous demonstration. My informant knew what they were supposed to shout, but would not tell me.

Next day, the day of the strike in Paris, I found out what they had been told to shout for: 'Nice, Corsica, Tunisia.'

That was the beginning of the end of appeasement.

# IV

## THE SPRING OF WAR

TO HISTORIANS the fifteenth of March, 1939, will certainly appear as an equinoctial date in the cycles of European war and peace, for it was on this date that the German army, in violation of Hitler's pledged word, penetrated into what had remained of Czechoslovakia. Looking back, it seems that from that date the die was cast — in fact there was a distinct premonition of this at the time. Officially, the eleventh of March marked the end of the policy of appeasement, of European reconciliation, to which all the governments of Europe had continued to pay at least lip-service ever since Munich. I remember that a few days later, at the height of the diplomatic crisis provoked by the proclamation of the German protectorate over Bohemia-Moravia, a well-informed diplomatic friend in the embassy of a great non-European republic said to me:

'A European war is inevitable now.'

'Even if Hitler leaves the French alone and keeps his face turned toward the east?' I asked.

'It does not depend on Hitler any more; it depends on France and England.'

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‘You mean that the French and British will force a war with Hitler?’

‘You can put it that way if you like. It would be more accurate to say that they now have no choice but to follow a policy which will leave Hitler no choice but to make war.’

The course of events has proved that my diplomatic friend was right in naming March 15 as the turning-point in the chronology of events; from then on the light of peace grew shorter day by day; but in the causality of the mind it had been foreshadowed by an earlier turning-point.

This was the launching of the campaign of Italian territorial revendications which I mentioned at the end of the last chapter. It started on November 30, 1938, and the date is doubly significant because on the same day Premier Daladier crushed the great Paris strike, scotching an incipient revolution which Munich had contributed to bring about.

Events still closer to Munich had helped to set the psychological stage for the autumnal equinox of appeasement. Though the reprisal pogroms in Germany which followed the assassination in Paris of the German diplomat von Rath by a young Jew named Herschel Grynszpan had not provoked any very great reaction in France, in many other countries a moral tornado was raging. In England even the staunchest partisans of appeasement could not suppress their indignation, in fact did not attempt to, counting on the Anglo-Saxon faculty for experiencing generous emotions without allowing them to prejudice realistic policy. Even in Italy, bound to Germany by multiple ties of interest and intellectual sympathy, I found a surprisingly strong undercurrent of disgust at the conduct of these uncouth allies. Though fascist ideology could not disapprove this exhibition of fascist

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violence, Latin humaneness was instinctively revolted by the unleashing of premeditated brutality. Moreover, I had noticed before that Italians could combine almost incredible cynicism in action with a sincere and highly sensitive appreciation of moral values, at least all those that fill the mouth and make for musical oratory. Moreover, the Italians were beginning to find the Axis atmosphere slightly stifling; the apogee of German influence in Rome coincided with the first stirrings of an Italian revolt against *Deutschtum*, so that behind the Italian diatribes against the decadent democracies one detected a nuance of reproach and almost regret.

Switzerland, however, was the center of the anti-Munich sentiment sweeping over Europe. Arriving in Geneva from Rome on my way to Tunisia, where a Mediterranean Sudeten problem seemed to be in the making, I found indignation unanimous, vehement, and pitched to an unexpectedly high key. Earlier in the year I had detected the first precocious budding of appeasement amid the snows. The stolid Swiss bourgeoisie now appeared to look upon Hitler as a reincarnation of the anti-Christ, and Nazi Germany as a greater menace to occidental civilization than even Bolshevik Russia. Because anti-Semitism in a mild form was chronic in Switzerland, at least the German-speaking part, the reaction against it now was fevered. The Swiss did not content themselves with denouncing German anti-Semitism; they had definitely turned sour on the whole policy of appeasement, criticized Munich and the weak-kneed great democracies, and were full of heavy sarcasms about Mr. Chamberlain's umbrella.

This reaction interested me intensely. I had always found Switzerland a particularly sensitive barometer of intellectual

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currents in Europe; ideas were usually born in Paris, but often the first you heard of them was in Geneva or Zurich. In regard to moral currents in European life, Switzerland was more than a barometer. It was a condenser and often even the source. Whether because of Calvin's ghost or not, Switzerland has become in a sense the guardian of Europe's conscience, a dry cold wind of inhibition, blowing amid the glaciers. The Swiss press is the only one in Europe which will banner-line a spiritual trend of a moral force when detected by alert reporters, specially trained in this phase of journalism. From what I read and heard in my brief stay in Switzerland there could be no doubt about it: the conscience of Europe, which had approved, now condemned appeasement. And Mr. Roosevelt, the only democratic statesman who knew how to harness moral forces to political ends without being pulled apart by them, had as usual anticipated the verdict by spectacularly withdrawing his ambassador from Berlin, a gesture which had more practical consequences than was realized at the time, being the first American contribution to the war of 1939.

It is doubtful in my mind that Chamberlain and Daladier at the love-feast of Munich seriously anticipated an era of European reconciliation based upon disarmament and territorial revision, including discussion of Germany's colonial claims. I think it is even more doubtful that Hitler did. However that may be, any possibility of a European settlement was seriously compromised by the October pogroms in Germany and the inevitable reaction to them elsewhere. Disarmament and colonies could not be discussed in such an atmosphere. Hence appeasement could not take root.

The cries of 'Corsica, Nice, Tunisia' in the streets of Rome

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and inside the Italian Parliament under the outraged mustache of French Ambassador François-Poncet, freshly arrived in Italy after social triumphs in Berlin and Berchtesgaden, were not calculated to improve the atmosphere, though an observer who did not take into account the complexities of the human soul might have been surprised by the violence of the French reaction.

From the demonstration in Rome and the riots in Tunis which they indirectly caused to flare up, the French deduced, rightly, I imagine, that Mussolini wished to create a Sudeten problem in Tunisia and eventually settle it by a Mediterranean Munich, as if the central European one had not nearly finished France. It was, moreover, suspected that Mussolini's outburst was part of a game concerted in advance with Hitler. All this helped to shake the surviving faith in appeasement, but the rather superficial diplomatic crisis which ensued was due mainly to the emotional reaction of the French people. Because they were keenly conscious of the humiliation of Munich, the moral Caporetto, the French were in no mood to stand any impertinence from a nation they had always despised as a military power. Resistance to Italy, it was generally felt, was perfectly safe, since if it came to war Italy would be quickly smashed, therefore why give away anything? *Au contraire*, what a chance to show these impudent macaroni-eaters, and incidentally the world, that France is still France! The mere fact that the Duce had dared provoke France in such a way was taken as a humiliation, a sign that France was hardly considered any longer as a first-class power. The sympathies which successive fascist propaganda ministers had labored so hard and spent so much money to acquire in France counted for nothing. In fact it was the Italophiles who were the **most** outraged. The turbulent student hordes of the Latin

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Quarter who during the Abyssinian War rioted against sanctions turned out into the streets again shouting for the annexation of Venice, Sicily, and Caporetto.

The Government, and even the powers of finance behind the Government, encouraged this anti-Italian movement, which needed no encouragement, as a timely antidote to the post-Munich neurasthenia, which had become so acute as to alarm even the most optimistic or obtuse.

The antidote worked. Later it was said, and generally accepted as a profound truth in frivolous dress, that Mussolini had saved France when she was on the brink of disaster. In a sense it was true, but France's national convalescence followed an historic pattern. Mussolini merely crystallized a spiritual revolution which in many ways was like the German or Italian revolutions. The humiliation of Caporetto was one of the factors which produced Italian fascism. The humiliation of Versailles was one of the factors which produced Hitler. Both these régimes were based on militarism, nationalism, and imperialism. Munich did not lead to political fascism in France — has not yet, at any rate — but it did inspire a resurgence of militarism, nationalism, and imperialism, an inevitable reaction to the propaganda excesses of the pacifists and the defeatists. And though France did not follow the path of fascism to the end, the French people found their predestined *dux* in Edouard Daladier, and the hatred which the political parties of the Left had for Italian fascism ironically helped Daladier to create for himself a unique situation which emotionally, though not politically, very much resembled that of a fascist dictator.

Whether the verdict of the future on Daladier will be that he was a Kerensky of the Right, a peace-time Clemenceau, or simply

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the man who was Premier of France when war broke out, circumstances have already established him in history as an essential actor in the European drama. He led his country into Munich and then rallied it after Munich, thereby saving France and losing peace. Between October, 1938, and September, 1939, Daladier's character underwent changes remarkable in a grown man, and the evolution of his character coincided with the psychological evolution of the French people, so that it is doubly worth tracing.

Until Munich, Daladier had a very uneven record as a politician. His supporters called him the 'bull of the Camargue,' his enemies the 'reed painted like steel.' The legend of Daladier as a strong man persisted despite many exhibitions of weakness in a crisis. Even the catastrophe of the sixth of February did not destroy it. Perhaps the legend survived because this strong, sincere, timid, unconfident baker's son was so unpredictable, because the contrast between his brutal dictator's jaw and his gentle grave eyes opened the doors to so many possibilities. Perhaps this contrast was the key to his character. I have heard men who knew him well say that it was, that Daladier was a passionate man given to brutal, almost uncontrollable outbursts of bad temper and for that reason perpetually in fear of his own violence. His enemies, in the usual witty, slanderous French fashion, declared that the key to the enigma was much simpler: that it was just a question of how many glasses of *pastis* — a vile absinthe concoction popular in Daladier's native Midi — he had under his belt at the moment. Until Munich he had usually given the impression of having too many or too few.

At the conference of Munich the bull of the Camargue came into his own, and, probably to his great surprise discovered that



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instead of going peace to death he had made the best of a very bad situation. I do not think the anecdote has ever been published, but I have it from a man who is absolutely trustworthy and was in a position to know. It seems that Hitler when the four-power conference started had one more trick up his sleeve, that after luring Daladier and Chamberlain to Munich in the belief that he was ready to accept a diplomatic compromise he confronted them with demands more drastic than those contained in the rejected Godesberg memorandum. When Daladier discovered this he lost his temper. In the middle of one of Hitler's tirades he got up, stalked out of the conference room, and slammed the door behind him.

For half an hour there was panic. Goering rushed after Daladier, pleading with him to return to the conference room. The bull simply snorted and declared flatly that he would not return until Hitler stopped ranting and became reasonable. Eventually the Führer sent out a conciliatory message and the conference resumed in a more reasonable vein, ending with a compromise the French people could swallow.

Whether or not this success was the reason for it, Daladier returned from Munich a changed man. When I heard him speak in the Chamber of Deputies a few days after his return I was astonished. I had never heard him talk like that, in fact had never heard anyone in France talk like that. Even the timbre of his voice was different; I have seldom heard such contained passion or felt the impact of such an indomitable will. I was so swept away by my emotions that I cabled to my paper that he sounded like a reasonable Hitler or a sincere Mussolini, and that I rather suspected he was going to be one or the other to France.

The thirtieth of November, 1938, gave Daladier the chance to

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play his new rôle. In the first place, his strong-handed but humane suppression of the strike showed the French people — and what is more important showed Daladier himself — that it is possible to be an authoritarian without being brutal or tyrannical; that force, as Lyautey and other leaders of men had noticed, can serve as a prophylactic to violence. In the second place, the Italian campaign against the French Empire converted Daladier from a partisan chief into a national leader. As Premier it was Daladier's duty to answer for France, and in doing so he had become automatically the spokesman of the whole French people.

He immediately set to work cleverly to utilize his position and the favorable circumstances, to launch a propaganda campaign of national regeneration. His official visit to Corsica and Tunisia was more than a spectacular answer to Mussolini; it was the beginning of a campaign of education for the French people in the old-fashioned virtues of discipline, patriotism, and courage. Covering it in Tunis, hard by the ruins of Hannibal's Carthage, where the same lesson was more dramatically written in stones, I could understand how necessary it was, but I remained somewhat dubious of its efficacy.

When I returned to France at the beginning of the New Year I could feel a change, however. Appeasement still had many staunch adherents; M. Bonnet notably was trying valiantly to appease the quarrel with Italy, but the tripes of the French bourgeoisie had noticeably hardened, if their hearts had not softened. Xenophobia, a recurrent fever in France, and frequently a disagreeable symptom of returning health, had become quite strong and was destined to become almost hysterical later in the winter, thanks to the influx of refugees from loyalist Spain.

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I was particularly impressed by the amount of militarist propaganda in the formerly defeatist press and in the movies, and by the continuing imperial ballyhoo started by Daladier's trip.

There was also a new political slogan: peace through strength and courage. Many of the papers which had preached that resistance to German demands inevitably meant war now explained to the readers that any concessions to Italy under the present circumstances would only whet Mussolini's appetite, encourage still more drastic demands, and ultimately lead to war.

This new and virile tone, I learned, came from Daladier and the general staff, which had come to feel that morale was one of the most important factors in French security. Daladier, it developed, was seconded by a French Brains Trust, which included military lights like General Gamelin, Finance Minister Paul Reynaud, Daladier's almost too brilliant second in the cabinet, and Alexis Leger, a somewhat overly cerebral poet but a very clairvoyant diplomat, the chief official of the Quai d'Orsay.

An equally clairvoyant if sometimes impetuous foreign diplomat, United States Ambassador William Christian Bullitt, was for all practical purposes a member of the Daladier Brains Trust, as well as being confessor and adviser on psychological problems, personal or otherwise, to most of the French cabinet. Few men have ever influenced the course of history so discreetly yet so decisively as Bullitt by his part in arranging the sale to France of five hundred American military planes of recent model, to the great scandal of the American isolationists.

Other members of the Brains Trust which had undertaken the psychological reconditioning of the French people included professional intellectuals and artists. One of them, André Chamson,

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a young novelist and amateur archeologist, wrote most of Daladier's speeches for him, though the homely reasonableness, the pacific stubbornness, typical of millions of French peasants and small shopkeepers, came from Daladier himself, a *petit bourgeois* with a cultured mind. Later I met Chamson at the front, fighting the war he had helped to prepare, feverishly roaming around in no-man's-land where he had no particular business, hunting for a prisoner. A tough archeologist.

A particularly surprising member of the Brains Trust, and a very important one, was the word-painter and dramatist Jean Giraudoux, who later as chief of the Commissariat of Information became the Goebbels of France. This delicate prose-poet, this literary and less robust Mozart, whose *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu* is, to my mind, one of the most moving of modern plays, had for years led a Jekyll and Hyde existence, appearing by day as a sober functionary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Now, in the period of convalescence after Munich, he united his two incarnations and produced a political tract entitled *Pleins Pouvoirs* which harnessed his tender humor and his magical fantasy to the propaganda themes of Daladier and the general staff.

It was a charming and an infuriating book because it gave enlightened expression to the political regression characteristic of France — and the rest of the world — at the moment. Giraudoux's plan for the moral regeneration of France through internal and imperial development was doubtless sound, but it implied a renunciation of France's European mission and a return to nineteenth-century nationalism, stripped of its aggressiveness. This was the French form of isolationism in a world of nations which were still culturally and even economically interdependent

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and therefore, it seemed to me, doomed to conflict unless they collaborated.

To a foreign observer who had known the France of Briand and was still under the influence of Wilsonian, to say nothing of Rooseveltian, ideology, intellectuals like Giraudoux and Chamson appeared as monkish chroniclers of the Dark Ages, keeping alight the flame of an earlier culture but sharing the superstitions and prejudices of their times. As a lover of France I approved of the policy Daladier and his Brains Trust were following, but I was constantly being shocked by the forms it took, even when I had to admit to myself they were inevitable.

This involved me in many arguments with French and American friends, all slightly benumbed by the prevailing world-weariness of the world-savers, aggravated by the final collapse of the Spanish republic. My friends of the Left, those who were not pacifists, approved generally of Daladier's foreign policy, even swallowed the flag-waving, but they were acutely alarmed at the fascist and dictatorial trend of his domestic policies. Daladier by constantly seeking greater power for himself was destroying democracy.

Your Popular Front destroyed democracy, I would usually answer. Now Daladier is saving France and he has to be a dictator to do it. It's just a question of whether you prefer a French or a German dictator.

My friends would say that I was tired, to talk like that, and I would answer of course I was tired, and so was everybody. The young men are tired, so the old men are taking over and making an old men's world for us, a world safe for reaction.

I had a different kind of argument with my more fiery anti-Munich friends like Jean — a brilliant young French doctor,

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or Edgar Mowrer, or H. R. Knickerbocker. They were suspicious even of Daladier's foreign policy, as long as Bonnet was there. He'll make another Munich if he gets a chance, they would say, not really believing it, but wanting an argument.

Daladier won't make another Munich, I would say, but maybe the French people will make another Munich. Nationalism was the greatest political force of the nineteenth century, but pacifism is the greatest force of the twentieth. Maybe the pacifists are right, maybe Daladier would do better to try to stir up the pacifism of the German people despite Hitler instead of trying to stir up the nationalism of the French people despite Bonnet and Chamberlain.

The German occupation of Prague knocked the wind out of this argument. From then on both in France and England the antithesis between nationalism and pacifism rapidly dwindled. The basis of pacifism was the instinct of self-preservation, and this instinct told Europeans that henceforth it was less dangerous to resist Hitler than to yield to him. Almost instantaneously, and quite spontaneously, men in every country in Europe suddenly opened their eyes and realized that the continent had become a dangerous and a tragic one to live in. The only chance of safety lay in armaments and allies.

Logically, it was hard to explain, for Hitler had broken his word many times before and the German occupation of the Bohemian bastion did not change the strategic picture in Europe any more radically than the *Anschluss* had changed it. My own explanation is that in reality Europe had been a dangerous and tragic place for several years, and that appeasement propaganda had blinded millions of people to this reality. March 15 shattered the illusion, and the reaction was so violent because the illusion

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had been so stubborn. From then on official propaganda in France and England began to prepare minds for war; it was not necessary to prepare them for resistance.

Defeatism lingered, particularly in France, but it was definitely a minority trend. When the Dantzig crisis first began to cloud the international horizon the French defeatists made an effort to raise the cry, 'Don't die for Dantzig,' but it was quickly squelched. Daladier, thanks to the dictatorial powers he had finally wrung from Parliament, thanks to Hitler, now possessed the means to curb defeatist propaganda of the kind which had preceded Munich. The City of London was no longer willing to finance such campaigns.

During the fevered spring crisis, when it seemed several times war was on the point of breaking out, there was little argument in the democracies as to what their policy should be. The man in the street still hoped for peace for another year or two, but thought it depended entirely on Hitler. The *leit-motif* of the French press became: How can we convince Hitler that this time we are not bluffing? Back of this worry was the haunting fear: Will Hitler restrain himself even if he knows we are not bluffing?

Defeatism began to revive only, and then rather feebly, when the American Congress refused to alter the Neutrality Act, thereby giving the artisans of Munich a bitter taste of their own medicine. Personally, I think it was the decisive American contribution to the war of 1939, for if Congress had followed Roosevelt, Hitler might never have invaded Poland. It was another victory of unenlightened pacifism over peace. And it was a cruel blow to the European democracies, another hope shattered. It was not only a question of the material aid refused, badly needed as the American planes would be in case of war. It also

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shook the faith of European democrats in their own cause. For a time public opinion, which had been firm since March, began to waver again in France and England, and as the summer wore on there arose a reasonable doubt as to whether **morale** would hold up under another nerve-offensive.



# V

## THE FATEFUL MONTH OF AUGUST

ON AUGUST 1, 1939, Europe was still diplomatically at peace, ironically more at peace than in any August since 1936, the war in Spain being over, but an uninformed stranger reading the German, French, British, Polish, and Italian press or listening to the propaganda broadcasts of the various government-controlled radio stations might easily have concluded that one of the most implacable wars of history was being waged in Europe. In fact, according to the French, British, and Polish press an implacable war was raging: the war of nerves.

As used by the French, who had invented or popularized the expression after Munich and suggested the idea to Hitler, its meaning was somewhat nebulous and even mythical. They thought of it chiefly as an elaborate and scientific method of intimidation, with overtones of magic, invented by Hitler to unnerve the western democracies, paralyze their reactions, while he destroyed their ally Poland and one by one gobbled up all the small countries in Europe under their noses. I as a foreign correspondent found it very difficult to make this newfangled notion of a war of nerves clear and real to my readers; in fact

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I was not entirely satisfied with it myself; it seemed at once too precise and too narrow a term to describe the emotional conflict in Europe.

Yet there could be no doubt about the conflict, and in many ways it deserved to be called a war. At first glance it seemed that public opinion both in Germany and in the democracies was being prepared for real war, and so it was. In England and France this spiritual preparation was carried out under the slogan that to save peace it was necessary to be prepared both materially and psychologically for war, not to be afraid of it. Yet I do not think there was any conscious hypocrisy in this propaganda-theme, and I think the men responsible for the security of France and England were quite right in their feeling that, psychologically, they were at war with Germany.

Certainly, propaganda and other forms of psychological warfare were no historical novelty. I had for two years been doing a good deal of research on this subject and been frequently amazed to see how extensively propaganda was utilized and understood hundreds of years before the word in the modern sense existed. In fact I was not far from believing that the exploitation of politico-religious myths by means of what today we call propaganda was the principal key to the rise and fall of empires and civilizations. Never, however, had the world seen propaganda in all its forms used on such a tremendous scale, with so much precision and efficacy, as in this war of nerves which was really an invisible war of wills. Probably this was because the modern world possessed technical instruments for the dissemination of propaganda and a scientific knowledge of the inner forces which determine opinion and control nerves that the world had never seen before.

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In one sense it was like some magical war of witch-doctors in the jungle, primitive savages willing one another to destruction, and in fact the mentality of some of the arch-propagandists like Goebbels seemed to me very close to that of primitive witch-doctors; Hitler himself in *Mein Kampf* attributes to propaganda a virtue which is almost magical. Yet the cold-blooded technical organization and the scientific knowledge back of this modern magic were very far from the jungle, and the magic was taken seriously by highly practical men.

I knew that the French General Staff, which has not dabbled in magic for many centuries, considered the campaign of the Teuton witch-doctors a real menace to France's military security. Skeptical at first, the soldiers had finally accepted the reality of the war of nerves; in fact I believe it was the general staff which opened the eyes of the civilians in the French Government, and now walrus-mustached ex-cavalry officers were methodically plotting the strategy and tactics of psychological warfare.

They had to take it seriously because they knew from their Intelligence reports that the hereditary enemy was so taking it. They knew not only that the Germans were spending fabulous sums on propaganda, that they had bought up many French journalists and even whole papers, that they maintained literally thousands of agents in all classes of French society and through them were able to launch whispering campaigns of great efficacy, but also that all the German propaganda was scientifically controlled and checked in a special 'psychological laboratory' attached to the Ministry of Propaganda.

They knew that a special 'psychological espionage service' reported with great accuracy on movements of public opinion in foreign countries, acting like artillery spotters to inform the

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propaganda headquarters where their psychological bombshells were falling and what effect their paper bullets were having on the enemy's morale.

They knew that there was an intimate relation between the German conception of propaganda and Nazi ideology in the broader sense which gave it a peculiar aggressiveness and force, especially in a country like France, whose political institutions were decaying. They knew from secret Nazi manuals, stolen by French spies and brought to Paris as if they had been military plans, that the real aim of psychological warfare as understood by the Nazis was not to convert outsiders to their cause as commercial propagandists do, but to demoralize the enemy, to destroy the cohesion, discipline, and collective morale of hostile social groups. In other words, to break the enemy's will-to-win or simply his will-to-resist as in war. In the modern doctrine of war, even the French one, this was coming to be recognized as the real goal of military operations; economic and military attack was considered merely as a means to this end.

Hitler and Goebbels, the French spies learned, had improved on this theory. They proposed to break down the enemy's will-to-resist by attack from within, in time of peace, so that to the Nazis peace meant merely the pre-military phase of war (and war no doubt meant merely the pre-diplomatic stage in negotiation).

Hermann Rauschnig, the former President of the Dantzig Senate, quotes Hitler as saying: 'Artillery preparation before an attack as during the World War will be replaced in the future war by the psychological dislocation of the adversary through revolutionary propaganda.'

I do not know that Rauschnig has quoted Hitler accurately,

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but I do know that this is also the conception of psychological war which the French General Staff attributes to Hitler. Herr Albrecht Blau, reputedly the chief of the Nazi 'psychological laboratory,' is also quoted by informed Frenchmen as saying as early as 1935 that 'in case of war Germany will be able to handle absolutely new strategical problems of capital importance and revolutionary nature.' And Colonel Tellgiebel, an expert of the German War Ministry, wrote in the official organ of the Ministry that victory in war will depend on how the propaganda campaign is carried out. Coming from a professional soldier, not a Nazi theorist, that impressed the French military mind deeply.

One of the most striking things about the Nazi nerve-tactics, the French discovered, was the intensive use of dissolvent propaganda, dissolvent because intended to dissolve morale and social cohesion. This propaganda might be purely defeatist — the French army is no good, Germany is invincible, etc. — or it might be terrorist. Hitler has achieved much of his success by what he calls 'the spiritual use of violence.' By this he does not mean showing your force to economize the use of it, as Lyautey did, but using real force symbolically, spectacularly to create an irrational fear. Violence, in the Hitlerian theory, is displayed excessively, gratuitously, but not too frequently; the threat always remains a little shadowy and therefore all the more terrible. A dark hint is frequently more terrifying than an open threat, and German propaganda agents, the French learned, were carefully schooled in the fine art of dropping dark hints. A lot of dark hints were being dropped by German propaganda agents in France around the beginning of August, but I never succeeded in catching any at the source until later, when the war had already started, and I will save this for a later chapter.

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I did, however, pick up a number of 'defeatist' rumors, sometimes from Frenchmen whose attitude was definitely suspicious. I remember once being asked to meet a rich young Frenchman who was at that time publishing an obscure weekly paper. He had just returned from a period of military service as a reserve officer and, almost before the introductions were finished, launched into a long and gloomy account of the French army, how disorganized and demoralized it was, how bad the equipment was, etc. Knowing that I was an American correspondent whose dispatches might be influenced by such seemingly inside information, this man, I thought, must be either a fool or a traitor, and I soon discovered that he was no fool. He professed to be sure that the Polish crisis would end in another Munich and not in war, and offered to arrange an interview for me with an intimate friend in the French cabinet, who was shortly going to get a more important portfolio in a cabinet reshuffle (which never came off) and would confirm to me the story about the new Munich.

Early in the summer a well-informed French friend, personally above suspicion, told me he had it from the horse's mouth that the crisis would eventually lead to general mobilization in France, but that after mobilizing, the Government, instead of making war, would back down again. This rumor might have had a Russian instead of a German origin, but in addition to the defeatist trend it illustrates another form of Nazi dissolvent propaganda: sowing seeds of doubt, undermining confidence in authority. I had discovered for myself, in Czechoslovakia and in Austria just before the *Anschluss*, the Nazi trick of defying and ridiculing authority, to destroy its prestige. I had seen bands of young Nazis in the streets of Vienna playing all sorts of schoolboy tricks on the police, not out of mischief but on

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orders and for the purpose of destroying public respect for them. The Germans have a special talent for these schoolroom-rebellion tactics, and have often used them with deadly effect.

Another form of dissolvent propaganda consisted simply in racial or social separatism, getting enemies quarreling among themselves. German agents were active not only in Alsace, where there was already a healthy separatist movement to start with, but also in Brittany. I used to receive the Breton autonomist paper *Breiz Atao* every week, and in addition to purely Breton aspirations, it reflected all the principal themes of German propaganda. After the outbreak of war I heard that the chief of the Breton autonomist movement had been arrested and shot, and though I could not confirm this report it did not shock me.

All intelligent and impartial observers had suspected for years that the Nazis were encouraging anti-Semitic propaganda outside of Germany, not so much to do in the Jews but simply to get the Gentiles fighting among themselves over the Jewish question. Reactionaries in the French army, like reactionaries everywhere, were reluctant to believe this until they read about the strategy of Jew-baiting in Nazi propaganda manuals. There was also evidence that the Nazis had noticed the great political controversies which flared up in France over certain mysterious crimes like the kidnaping of General Miller, the bombing of the Rue de Presbourg, the Prince murder (or suicide), and other such shadowy affairs, and had noted this down as a good means of getting the French fighting among themselves. In fact, it is not impossible that German agents played a rôle in one or more of these unsolved political crimes.

Early in the summer Daladier made a speech before the Chamber — which was expurgated by the appeasement press —

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referring to the existence of a network of 'propaganda, espionage, and even worse things' in France. A couple of weeks later journalists in Paris and eventually the French public discovered that Daladier had at last launched a counter-offensive on the nerve-front.

Otto Abetz, blond, winsome collaborator and intimate of Ribbentrop, professed champion in Germany of reconciliation with France and a highly adroit purchaser of French consciences, was quietly expelled from the country. He had rendered his country notable services as a propaganda agent and paymaster in France before the Czech crisis, working under the nose of Foreign Minister Bonnet, whose dinners and tea parties he often attended, and had resumed operations in view of the Polish crisis. Also immediately afterward two sensational arrests were revealed: the news editor of the semi-official *Temps* and an advertising executive of the patriotic *Figaro* were incarcerated in a military prison and allegedly confessed taking bribes from the German Government to do both espionage and propaganda work. A number of other arrests were reported but never confirmed.

Many more arrests might have been made, but Daladier, wisely or timidly, contented himself with letting the minor crooks know that they were known, and with calling in the misguided patriots who had unconsciously betrayed France through their ideological sympathies, in order to explain the facts of life to them. Taking a leaf from the Nazi tactics, he dropped a few dark hints himself about certain unnamed Frenchmen who were going to be taken out and shot on the first day of war, and this did a great deal of good.

All this made covering the nerve-front very exciting for anyone



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who was a little on the inside. I was not very much on the inside, but at least my attention had been called to its existence, and soon I found that wherever I went some dramatic reminder of the invisible war popped up. My cook and my concierge became unwitting war correspondents, bringing me news of the marketplace, always a fine listening-post in the war of nerves. My American and French friends in all walks of life became, likewise unwittingly, my guinea pigs whose emotional reactions to the propaganda bombardments and counter-bombardments I studied with scientific callousness. The press served me, among other things, as a litmus paper. I knew by a private informant who attended the nightly conferences for the French press at the Quai d'Orsay how the French Government was trying to direct American opinion. I knew the editorial policies and the secret interests back of the principal British and French papers, and the deflection caused by home or foreign propaganda could be easily gauged.

In the rest of this chapter and the next I want to give the reader some idea of how it feels to cover a great offensive in a war of nerves, something of the atmosphere and color of a typical battlefield of the mind. I think the diaries which my wife and I kept day by day during the climactic month of August bring out the feel of the nerve-war better than anything I could possibly write today. One word of caution about them, however: the history which is recorded in these diaries is undigested history. They are not intended to give the inside story of the crisis which led to war, but the story of the inner war in so far as it could be seen or guessed from outward signs. They are incomplete and frequently inaccurate, as would be the day-by-day record of a great military battle kept by a private in a front-line trench.

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On the strength of material which is available now, but was not then, I could have revised and assimilated my impressions of the crisis, but I was afraid of losing the feel of it. Therefore, I give you herewith the diaries in the raw state, merely shortened a little and with expurgations in a few rare passages where I should risk betraying a confidence.

*August 1*

'Had a long talk with Maynard Barnes at our Embassy. Like nearly everyone he seemed pretty gloomy. He did not think that the current crisis would necessarily end in war this summer, but couldn't see any way out in the end. Haven't seen Bullitt recently, so don't know exactly what he thinks. Last spring I know he was very pessimistic, seemed to think war before summer pretty nearly inevitable. His pessimism was of course derived from Daladier and the general staff. Personally, I think someone exaggerated the danger [this suspicion now seems to have been unfounded], perhaps with the unfortunate idea that it would influence the American Congress in favor of amending the Neutrality Act. Judging by what I hear from America, including the testimony of intelligent observers like John Gunther, the spring war scare had the opposite effect. When the war did not come, people thought they were being fooled, thought all the war talk was propaganda. My personal experience is that democratic statesmen and diplomats lie almost as much as the dictators, though not in such a brazen way, and thereby undermine public confidence. That is why Nazi dissolvent propaganda is so effective: because of bad leadership the doubt is already in our hearts.

'Doubt is what the French Government is most afraid of.

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The official thesis is that this is a war of nerves; Hitler intends to have Dantzig by bluff and blackmail, by the threat of war and playing on the nerves of his adversaries until they are ready to give in to have peace. But this time, says Daladier, we won't give in, we won't pay any attention to the threats, and if Hitler tries to use force we shall go to war. Obviously if any doubt arises about the resolution of the French and British to protect Poland the war of nerves may be lost — or else converted into real war through Hitler's making a mistake as to how far he can go. If he should stage an internal coup in Dantzig, for instance, thinking that at the last moment Poland will back down or England and France will abandon her to her fate as they abandoned Czechoslovakia.

'This is one of the most persistent *motifs* of the French press: Hitler is misinformed; he does not know the true state of mind in France and England; he is on the eve of plunging Europe into a general war through a tragic blunder similar to the Kaiser's when he thought England would not fight in 1914.

'Myself, I don't know what is the true state of mind in France and England. According to the Public Opinion Institute, 76 per cent of the French people last month favored preventing Hitler from taking Dantzig, by force if necessary. Everyone around our Embassy professes to believe that the French Government will not back down on the precise undertakings to support Poland in any action Poland may deem fit to preserve her independence. England has committed herself this time, whereas in the case of Czechoslovakia she was not committed. I don't see very well how those commitments can be repudiated. And yet I still feel dubious. Several of the American correspondents here are frankly skeptical. In London the best-informed American correspond-

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ents like Paul Ward and Dave Darrah are not skeptical. They simply seem convinced that there will not be a war, because the Dantzig question is going to be settled amicably, to the satisfaction of Hitler, naturally.

'Many Frenchmen of the Left are equally skeptical, or profess to be. It is hard to tell how sincerely they believe in the likelihood of another Munich; they say it, but they don't act as if they really believed it.

'Back of all this there is the fear that something graver than an international poker game over Dantzig is at stake. "Time is playing against Hitler," people say. "The democracies will soon be better armed than he is. He sees war coming inevitably because he cannot abandon his ambitions, so he must strike now before his enemies are too strong."

'Because of this theory, widely held, the Government's efforts to convince the public that it is only a nerve-war cannot be completely successful.'

### *August 2*

'Today Germany is celebrating as a national holiday the outbreak of the World War twenty-five years ago. A good piece of totalitarian propaganda, killing many birds with one stone. The main purpose obviously is to rid the German people of the obsession of an historical nightmare. Goebbels and Hitler realize the psychological importance of the calendar. People are saying everywhere, "It's just like 1914." The calendar alone creates the war scare: twenty-fifth anniversary of the World War — much more significant than the twenty-fourth or the twenty-sixth anniversary — month of August, harvests in, armies facing one another across frontiers, history repeating itself. Hitler is trying

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to convince the German people that everything is the same as in 1914 except one thing: Germany is too strong to be beaten as she was then, strong enough to win the historical revenge which will establish that the sacrifices of 1914-1918 were not in vain. In the same way, official propaganda in France and England attempts to convince the public that this summer is a repetition of last, that Hitler is trying to win Dantzig by the same methods he won Czechoslovakia, but that this time the democracies will hold firm and Hitler will back down at the last moment.... But the public is haunted by the idea that if Hitler sees he is not winning the nerve-war he will start a real war.

'The papers here haven't forgotten the anniversary of the World War. As in Germany, they are making calculations to show that the position is more favorable than in 1914. Indeed it seems to be, as far as material forces are concerned. Still there is a strong undertone of gloom in the press: "1914 all over again," even if the chances of victory seem more immediate, certainly can only evoke a feeling of hopeless fatality. France and England did not get much out of their victory last time except the soon-faded dream of a better world. Now we are back where we started, facing the whole thing all over again. All our bright dreams have faded, all our utopias of collective security have collapsed. Two disillusionments have merged in one bitterness. We are still suffering from the hangover, from the cold morning-after, of the idealistic wartime and post-war slogans, and on top of this is a new hangover, the depression following the collapse of the anti-fascist "fronts," to save Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia, Spain; the shambles of the New Deal in America and the rout of the Popular Front in France. The purge in Russia has disgusted many idealists of the Left; the internal dissensions of the

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Spanish republic, which was the symbol of our united resistance to the new barbarism, have disheartened us. Our one hope was America and Roosevelt; the defeat of the Neutrality Bill has destroyed this hope, for the time being, at least; it was a heavy blow, the more so because here too an historical pattern was repeating itself as in the Nietzschean nightmare. . . . These are times of intellectual and moral disarray like the last days of the Weimar Republic in Germany. I notice this disarray particularly among my young friends of the Left; those who have not fled to the prison-refuge of communist doctrine, who have not put their minds in the strait-jacket of party discipline, have become anarchists for all practical purposes. Their double disillusionment reflects itself in a double, often contradictory, cynicism. One day they are full of fury and foreboding at some piece of militarist propaganda reminiscent of the tricolor pre-war idealism, of sinister memory. The next day they are pouring cynical scorn on the Government over some suspected outcropping of latent "Munichism" or appeasement. Doubt and suspicion spring up overnight into monstrous moral toadstools. British anti-fascists, American interventionists, display the same symptoms. Robert Dell, the venerable crusader of every rebellion, ever ready to proclaim the holy war against reaction, approves the American isolationists on the ground that France and England, having betrayed democracy, deserve no support. . . . John Gunther, freshly arrived from the United States, discovers that France has just concluded a barter arrangement with Germany, trading the iron ore of Lorraine for coke from the Ruhr, and shies like a horse. . . . It doesn't smell right, he says. . . . Apparently American morale is allergic to iron ore as the French is to petroleum . . . one whiff of petrol and any idealistic crusade

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collapses in this country. . . . The idea of an alliance with the Soviet anti-Christ acts on some people the same way; with others it's the Jews. Knickerbocker is uneasy about the Soviet alliance, but flays Gunther for letting himself be routed by a few wagons of iron ore. Knick now says he believes all the wartime stories about the Germans, thinks the Germans were treated too well in the last war and this time Germany must be broken up. On another occasion X — (an American woman) goes further, says every male German must be castrated. . . . These opinions of course expressed in heat of argument, late at night, after drinks. Weeks ago, however, Madame L — (a French liberal) remarked to me in cold blood at dinner that she had warned some German exiles not to think that next time everything would be forgotten and forgiven by establishing another Weimar Republic. . . . No, the German people must be taught a lesson. . . .

'At the moment a controversy is raging in the press over what to do with Germany after she has been licked. Pierre Cot is particularly concerned with drafting war aims at once, either to serve as a basis for settlement without war, or to rally America and other potential allies to the cause of another war to make the world safe for democracy. Léon Blum pleads the cause of the "good Germany," the Germany of Goethe and Beethoven; humanity and propaganda alike require that a distinction be made between Hitlerism and the German people. Kerillis, Maurras, Joseph Barthelemy, Pertinax, and others refute the theory of the "good" Germany, call with varying degrees of violence or reasonableness for the punishment, annihilation, or subjugation of the "eternal enemy." In these articles I see, for the first time since I have been in France, a reflection of the really deep and abiding racial hatred of Germany which civilized

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Frenchmen always try to fight down or at least to hide. . . . I am convinced this sentiment is much stronger than the hatred of the French proletariat for Hitler. Now it is unmistakably coming to the surface again. Unconsciously, I think, but surely, the government propaganda in France is following the path of regression because it is the path of least resistance, appealing to the more primitive strata of the French soul. . . . The old nationalism and the old militarism are emerging — with at least the tacit consent of the Left parties, who have always fought against it. The success of the July 14 military review in Paris shows this, I think. More than a fortnight later crowds of people are still standing in line to get into the cinemas to see the colored news reels of the parade. The hand of government propaganda is clearly apparent in the movies, both news reels and feature films. The patriotic note, especially in spy films, is so strong sometimes as to be almost nauseating, but the audiences seem to like it.

‘This is an ominous development but an inevitable one. Superficially France is demoralized, divided against itself. The French people have few common ideals, but they have one common enemy. Daladier in trying to restore the country’s morale from the abyss of Munich has kept political ideals in the background because they were controversial and has concentrated on the symbols of national unity, the flag, the army, the sacred frontiers, etc. . . . Daladier himself as Minister of War is a suitable figurehead for a movement of national unity. Ten months of this national propaganda have begun to produce some effects.

‘Earlier in the summer I visited a *chansonnier* place which appeals to a Right-wing clientèle. The conflict between disruptive, partisan class ideals and the national ideal was very striking. Almost in the same breath the artists mingled vituperation of



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Jews, war-mongers, revolutionaries, with bombastic threats and hymns of hate directed against Italy and Germany.

'Hitler can win a war of nerves, I think, if he succeeds in getting the French squabbling among themselves over foreign policy, but the nearer we get to war the harder this will be to achieve; when real war comes I think the German propaganda will be powerless to achieve anything, even when it succeeds in reaching the French people.'

August 3

'Five Left-wing intellectuals, including one well-known playwright and humorist, Henri Jeanson, have just been condemned to sentences ranging from eighteen months to two years for "*atteinte à l'intégrité du territoire nationale*." Crime was committed in the columns of the *Solidarité Internationale Anti-Fasciste*. Jeanson, I am informed, was guilty of a strong criticism of French colonial policy during which he said among other things that it was no better than German pre-war colonial policy. To me this is one of the most striking evidences of the totalitarian trend in France. It is true the sentences were exceptionally stiff because they were all passed in default. Still . . .

'Perhaps even more significant is the reaction to the sentences. On the Right naturally no protest, because the condemned were Leftists. On the orthodox Left no protest either, because they were Trotskyists, Pivertistes, etc. Really democracy in this country has already broken down because all groups approve the repressive use of authority when it operates against their enemies. I was not disturbed by the decree laws drastically restricting the freedom of the press, protecting military secrets, punishing Frenchmen who take money from a foreign power to

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spread propaganda, forbidding incitements to racial hatred, defeatism, attacks on the franc, etc. These are necessary defenses against German methods. Nor do I blame Daladier for using to the full his legal powers to govern by decree. Like nearly every intelligent Frenchman or friend of France last winter, I was glad to see Daladier stepping forward as a strong man because I thought the country needed a strong leader to survive in face of German and Italian dynamism. I felt and still feel in sympathy with the wave of anti-parliamentarianism which was sweeping over the country.\* People always crave for a strong leader in difficult times, especially in times of confusion and demoralization. Now I am getting a little bit worried. Not so much at the build-up given Daladier by the national press or his anti-parliamentarianism as at the general atmosphere of repression which prevails. Probably the most ominous symptom to my mind was the decree-law establishing *la code de la famille* and the accompanying demographic campaign, so similar to the demographic campaign in Italy and Germany. The repressive features of the new decrees are particularly striking: police measures against abortion, contraceptives, obscene literature and drawings, etc. Two years in prison for singing an indecent song in public! Police cleaning up bookshops, looking for pornographic engravings, etc. In short, a wave of morality. I haven't much fear that the French will ever go to any intolerable lengths in this direction, but as a symptom of reactionary spirit generally I find it significant and alarming. To me it indicates that there is an unavowed or unconscious motive back of all the reasonable arguments for order, discipline, unanimity, and looking after the future of the race. A motive which has nothing to do with national defense, but is of an emotional, even sexual nature.

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'I don't know whether it is because they smell reaction in the air or for purely political motives that the Left is campaigning against Daladier for having prolonged the Chamber by decree for two years. The cry of Boulangism is already being raised, and even some of Daladier's supporters are apparently getting a little worried at the dictatorial build-up he is getting, fearing he is on a slippery slope. On the other hand, the Right has discovered an alleged communist plot to foment a general wave of strikes in the factories in the fall. This whole phase of the situation must be watched closely.'

*August 4*

'Some anxiety over Dantzig and talk in the press about a new tension, alarmist rumors beginning to circulate, etc. The last we had heard about Dantzig, toward the end of last month, were assurances from the German press that Dantzig would soon return to the Reich and without a war. The French press expressed mild indignation over this impudence, but on the whole seemed relieved . . . anything that doesn't mean immediate trouble and painful decisions to be taken relieves us. . . . Now it seems the dispute between Poland and Dantzig over the customs question is getting dangerous, and there is an idea maybe the Germans are working it up as a pretext for taking some drastic action.

'Had lunch with X—— (an American correspondent), who shocked me by saying he thought Hitler was a great, sincere man, doing fine work in Germany, particularly in saving the country from the Jewish menace. In answer to a question X—— said he had always been anti-Semitic, but I don't believe it. Anyway, he loathes the British and says he would much rather

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live in Germany. By some tortuous piece of logic he believes that Chamberlain is carrying out a Jewish foreign policy. X—— doesn't believe there were any massacres in Germany last November; he is convinced that this is just another piece of Jewish propaganda.

'After lunch, had a drink with a group of foreign correspondents from the United States. It makes me furious whenever I hear American newspaper men talk calmly, even complacently, about the anti-Semitic movement in our own country, and speculate as to whether or not it will become an important political issue in the 1940 campaign. Talked about suppression of anti-Semitism in the American newspapers, and how this aroused suspicion and resentment among many Christians. Predicted that several states would pass legislation giving accused persons the right to demand trial by a Christian judge. Someone made a telling point, which was that just reading in the papers about the Semitic question, such as persecutions of the Jews in Germany, Nazi tirades against Jews, and so forth, got people thinking about the whole business and thereby aroused latent anti-Semitism, which has always existed in America.

'Later in cooler state of mind the whole business seemed less sinister. . . . Apart from German propaganda and resentment over economic competition of Jewish refugees, etc., I think our public has simply developed one of its ordinary streaks, is tired of being told all the time that Hitler is a monster, Naziism the world menace, Jews innocent victims of persecution, and with childish malice develops this suspicious interest in the other side of the case, the German side. Propaganda excesses always bring these revulsions of opinion. A universal human trait at all times, like

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blackballing Aristides the Just in Athens. Have noticed this reaction in myself after frequenting Communist or other earnest Left gatherings. At bottom I agree pretty well with their general position on Spain, but I get fed up with the religious atmosphere worked up about the Spanish republic, the ritual hymns of hate, the Cassandra prophecies about the fascist menace, etc., and the itch to debunk grows strong.

‘Probably these revulsions of a general current of opinion are temporary and rather superficial, but at a given moment they may offer a fertile soil for propaganda.

‘Ideologues, world-savers, and Jews don’t realize the inevitability of these reactions, and by trying to suppress them aggravate the revolt. People were moved for a while by the sufferings of the Jews; now they are tired of hearing about it, irritated at the Jews for keeping it up. Dosmar (a German refugee) says I am an unconscious anti-Semite because I have ideas like that. He says anti-Semitism is Goebbels’s main weapon; that anyone who has an anti-Semitic prejudice unconsciously can be made conscious of it and thus become an open anti-Semite; when he does he invariably becomes a pro-Nazi, or at least cannot be a real anti-Nazi. In this way anti-Semitic propaganda creates a “fifth column” for Hitler all around the world. I subscribe without reserves to this, have seen abundant evidence in France; and last fall in the Balkans I saw how German propaganda was concentrating on anti-Semitism, giving advertising to newspapers and orders to business houses only if they would take an anti-Semitic stand or fire Jewish employees. Once saw advertising manager of Belgrade *Vreme* give as a piece of “must” copy for foreign editor a translation of an anti-Semitic article in German paper.... Agree all this very dangerous, but on psychological

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grounds don't think total suppression helps, especially when Jews do the suppressing. Think right tactic would be to encourage anti-Semitism to manifest itself, then counteract it by rational propaganda, conducted entirely by Christians.'

*August 5*

'A picturesque incident in the nerve-war. Yesterday the Japanese ambassadors from Berlin and Rome had a private conference for themselves at Cernobbio, at the end published a communiqué announcing they were in agreement on the question of joining the Axis. . . . A lot of people took it seriously and much ink spilled over the lakeside encounter of the two little yellow diplomats, speculating on whether or not it really meant Japan was joining the Axis. Everyone knew the two ambassadors were favorable; the thing that attracted attention was their meeting by a lake for a conference, issuing a communiqué just like diplomats when they are negotiating some treaty.

'Interesting disclosures by Sir John Simon about the Link, instrument of German propaganda in the British upper crust. Just like France.

'Tension over Dantzig high, wide, and confused.'

The entries in my diary for August 6 and 7 are too laconic to be intelligible, but the clippings from the French and British papers of that date which I have made tell an interesting story. They revealed, guardedly but with an undertone of satisfaction, to the French and British people that the first serious war scare since May had developed a couple of days earlier and was now over, thanks to the firmness displayed by the Polish ally. Hitler had attempted unsuccessfully one of the classic maneuvers of the

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war of nerves: the symbolic *fait accompli*. On instructions from the nerve-strategists in Berlin the Dantzig Senate had on August 4 notified certain of the Polish customs inspectors stationed on Dantzig territory that from August 6 they would no longer be allowed to do any inspecting. Juridically this was a flagrant violation of Poland's treaty rights which the Poles had sworn to defend arms in hand, but would Poland dare risk war over such a technicality? Poland would, and did, by sending the Dantzigers a not-too-veiled ultimatum, and the Senate backed down.

While the crisis in Dantzig was on, the Governments in Paris and London prevented the press from playing it up as such. On August 7 the democratic press announced with disproportionate emphasis a lessening of the tension in Dantzig. The more truculent anti-Munich organs in France gloated openly over the German backdown, saying this showed how peace could be saved.

The lull was brief, just a breathing-space to arouse false hopes and make the next crisis more unpleasant. This was part of the Nazi formula for wearing down the adversaries' resistance. In Warsaw they did not even have any false hopes, as the following entry shows:

*August 8*

'Such a quiet day that I wasn't going to make any entry at all. The papers are still talking about a *détente* over Dantzig, speculating not too hopefully about how long it will last. The Communists and their friends have even scented a whiff of "Munichism" somewhere — vague rumors apparently from irresponsible British sources and veiled hints in Berlin — of

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friendly negotiations between Germany, France, and England, exchange of offers, guaranties, assurances, etc. They are getting all set for a big burst of indignation. I go to bed thinking it is the same old world, utterly hopeless but not so bad to live in while it lasts. Late at night awakened by a telephone call from Alex Small in Warsaw. Alex is taking the gloomy view, thinks war "quite probable" within ten days, perhaps even less; what are they thinking in Paris? I tell him what we are thinking about the Germans, which is that they are not plotting any immediate deviltry. He is only partly reassured, points out that it doesn't depend entirely on the Germans. Speaking guardedly so as not to offend possible Polish ears listening in on us, I gather that he is chiefly perturbed about the state of mind of the Poles. Judging from what Alex says they are beginning to show signs of cracking under the strain of the nerve-war. Not the way Goebbels and Hitler presumably intended, however, not getting cowardly, just sere — and wild. A considerable war-party is for cutting short the preliminaries and getting down to business, East Prussia being the first item on the agenda. Revelatory comment when Small tactfully hinted at the disadvantages of acquiring another minority: "Won't be any minority." Much of this no doubt picturesque exaggeration, for this is a private chat, not material for a story.

'If I can trust Alex, the sentiment of impending doom is nearly unanimous among the British and American correspondents in Poland. Even Sefton Delmar of the *Daily Express*, who has been Lord Beaverbrook's "Big Bertha" in the campaign to reassure the British public, thinks that the chances of war before the end of the month are pretty strong, says Alex. Delmar has just arrived from Dantzig. Saturday Alex is driving out



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into the country with two other correspondents to locate a village hideout for the day when the bombs will start falling. American Embassy, Alex loyally reports, not perturbed, no sign of jitters. "They already have their hideout organized," he adds. The conversation closes on a lighter note. Alex informs me that the Poles have banned the famous Hennessy Three Star brandy. Reason: Jean Hennessy, maker of same, owns a big interest in the French newspaper *L'Oeuvre*, which once printed an article by the Neo-Socialist and *défaitiste* deputy Marcel Déat entitled, "Don't Die for Dantzig." A mad world, my masters!

'All these alarms in Warsaw most likely mean nothing, I think as I crawl back into bed, but sleep surprises me once more grappling with the familiar and never-solved household conundrum: In case of an air raid would the cellar under our wing of the building or the lowest floor of the garage under the center wing make the best shelter? There are strong arguments on both sides.'

August 9

'A very full day. The propaganda bombardment from Berlin against Poland seems to have got under way seriously at last, and the tempo of the nerve-war has been stepped up for several notches overnight. Reactions here are crystallized around one particular development. Albert Forster, the Dantzig Nazi leader who was summoned to Berchtesgaden yesterday by the Führer, has returned to Dantzig and convoked the population to gather in the main square at eight o'clock tomorrow night to hear a speech by him. The placards announce that all this is intended as a monster demonstration against "threats made by Poland to destroy Dantzig with her cannons." (This refers to an imprudent

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boast in a Polish newspaper that if war were forced on Poland she would begin it by blowing Dantzig to bits, or something along those lines.) This has played into the hands of the Nazis, for it is a beautiful propaganda theme. There is no need to lie about it or distort it; just leave in the shade the contingencies and conditions attached to the Polish threat and concentrate on that one clear, dreadfully clear and unequivocal, picture: Polish guns blowing Dantzig to bits, Dantzig homes, Dantzig women, and Dantzig children. . . . No ifs and buts, no maybes or perhapses. The Poles announced it themselves. Only one thing to do: Poland must remove those guns or she proves herself the aggressor in the eyes of the world. You could start a war on less than that. What a hook to hang an ultimatum on! This is how I see it, how all the diplomats and journalists and other professionals here see it, but nobody believes that Forster will really deliver an ultimatum in the Führer's name tomorrow night, so the general public is worrying less about Hitler's using the axe which the Poles have inadvertently dropped in his lap than about something else. It seems to me that in the circumstances leading up to Forster's speech tomorrow night they see half-unconsciously a dress rehearsal of the final crisis which will bring the war. It recalls, too, Henlein's conference with Hitler last September, which if I remember correctly marked one of the irrevocable steps toward a major crisis. It is getting to be almost a classic image in the public mind — the local Führer suddenly summoned to Berchtesgaden for a conference with the great Führer of all the Führers, the subsequent consultation between Hitler and his military advisers in his mountain eerie; throw in this time for good measure Mussolini skipping the close of the Italian maneuvers to remain in Rome, near the telephone;

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finish off with the return of the sub-Führer and the announcement that he is going to speak with his master's voice the next day.

'I may be wrong, but my guess is that this is one of those repeated trials of suspense which Hitler imposes on his adversaries to shatter their nerves. That speech of Forster's tomorrow night is a little deadline, the first of a series of deadlines, in my opinion. Nobody thinks it will produce a real sensation, but you can't be sure. The French and British dispatches from Berlin emphasize that Hitler himself has prepared the speech for Forster, and that whatever he says it is likely to have a decisive effect on the evolution of the Polish-German problem.

'We don't feel like being too categorical tonight. Tomorrow after we have heard Forster we will know better where we stand. So we think. So the suspense is built up. The crisis is yet young; we won't wait for Doctor Forster to decide whether we shall lay in our usual supply of cheese and eggs for the week, as some people did last fall when they were awaiting the Führer's speeches or the outcome of negotiations in Berchtesgaden and Godesberg. Still it is a little deadline.

'The dispatches from Berlin read like last September's in other respects too. The German press has raised its voice sharply. Harping on the Polish threat to blow Dantzic to bits, Joseph Barnes of the New York *Herald Tribune* writes: "The German press answer today was to call this 'madness,' 'a declaration of war,' and 'criminal provocation,' and to charge Poland with 'running amok against peace and justice in Europe.'"

'It is a stronger language than has yet been used during the crisis, Barnes declares, but adds that "the very violence of this

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verbal attack convinced many observers here that Hitler's plans for translating it into action are not yet definite."

'Barnes also calls attention to the fact that Doctor Goebbels has not nominated any Polish statesman to play the rôle of villain held last summer by Benes. The diplomatic correspondent of the London *Times* likewise appears to believe that this is only the beginning of the German press campaign against Poland and only another episode in the nerve-war. He writes: "It is one of the signs that Europe must now expect an intensification of the German propaganda against Poland, against the 'peace front' generally and against Great Britain in particular. In other words, the campaign which the Nazis have styled a 'war of nerves' will be accentuated: nuisance values will be played up to their full effect and reports of troop movements will probably be used in the hope that some weakening or even panic on the 'peace front' may prove discernible."

'That of course was the voice of the British Foreign Office speaking. Daladier who, prompted by the French General Staff, has become a keen student and analyst of the nerve-war, apparently subscribes to the same view. This afternoon he counter-attacks by announcing to the press that instead of returning to Paris as scheduled he has decided to prolong his vacation on the Riviera, thus indicating he is not impressed by Hitler, Forster, and the German press.

'They are giving the public a sedative to counteract that German nerve-poison. Also a morale-stimulant in the form of the British naval review and air maneuvers. All the papers here play it up heavily with headlines and pictures. "The British fleet review. . . . Thirty-three kilometers of ships!" exclaims the Paris *Soir*. There are also detailed accounts of the defense exer-

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cises in England last night in which five hundred new British bombers flew out over the North Sea and the Channel, came back out of the night in groups to bomb, were met by eight hundred fighters and an unprecedented display of ground defense, all very realistic because the defense forces were not told when and where the enemy would strike, thus had to be ready everywhere and depend on their sound-detectors as in war.

‘No doubt the whole thing was a very effective piece of showmanship, demonstrating to the world that Britain and France are well prepared to resist, strong enough to launch a dangerous counter-attack.... But no answer to the German and Italian maneuvers as far as the psychological effect is concerned. The Axis powers are not merely exhibiting their might, their army maneuvers serve to cover up strategic concentrations of troops which constitute an immediate menace.... Our side is merely showing its guns; the enemy are pointing theirs. We are on the defensive and the initiative of the operations is left to the enemy... the ideal position in war, contends Captain Liddell Hart, the famous British military theorist, because crushing offensives on a great front only wear out the attacker, unless he has a superiority of more than three to one.

‘A sound theory in actual war, I believe, but we are not at war yet and the Germans are not wearing themselves out with their psychological offensive, though they may be wearing us out. That is the difference. The moral seems to be: in times of peace attack with your whole strength all along the line; in time of war let the enemy attack and wait until he is worn out to hit back. I wonder, if it comes to war, if Hitler will apply the second part of this theorem as he has applied the first, if the

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specter of a lightning war and tornadoes of steel and explosive from the skies is a purely imaginary menace?

'Had an interesting conversation with a well-informed French friend after dinner. It appears the rumor has been running insistently here that Daladier is going to call two more classes to the colors. My friend has checked today with a sure source and reports definitely that it has not been done, will not be done tomorrow, but may be done in a few days.'

'Also he reveals that our old friend Otto Abetz tried to come back into France again and was turned back at the Franco-Swiss frontier on August 3. Since the story only leaks out today and the German Ambassador, Count von Welczeck, called on Bonnet yesterday, I deduce that von Welczeck protested against this second expulsion of Ribbentrop's friend. The papers announce today that Paul Boncour, who once called Mussolini a Mardi-Gras Caesar and was called back a barbershop Danton — because of his white mane which gives him a resemblance to that fiery friend of man — is going to defend Henri de Kerillis in the libel suit Abetz has brought against him, with the approval of the German Government naturally.

'This duel between Abetz, styled by the French press the corrupter of souls, and Kerillis, the Flying Hussar of French nationalism, has a picturesque aspect. In 1916 Abetz, a child watching the Hagenbeck circus in Karlsruhe, was wounded in the leg when a French bombing squadron led by Captain de Kerillis came over and punished the town. In 1935, Kerillis says, Abetz, plying his Mephistophelian trade in Paris, called on Kerillis, told him smilingly about the Karlsruhe raid, and on the strength of it invited him to come to Germany and give lectures.

'It has another more important aspect, though. It is a very

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subtle psychological attack. The German Government is not trying so hard to rehabilitate Abetz, to get him back into France, for what he can do, but to win a symbolic victory over the elements of resistance, to discredit them, make them look foolish. If the attempt succeeds in a few weeks we shall see the Right press heaping scorn and derision on the "war-mongers," the hysterical old maids, those bitten by "espionitis," who denounced Abetz as a spy and a corrupter, and frothing with indignation over the Jewish slander-plot which tried to make traitors out of the honest French journalists who associated with Abetz.'

Attached to the sheets of my diary for August 9 there is a story from the Berlin correspondent of the London *Times* which throws striking light on another aspect of the war of nerves. This article, really an historical document of the highest importance, describes the unprecedented campaign of hate against England by which the rulers of Germany were attempting to mobilize the minds of the German people for war.

'An extraordinarily distorted outlook upon the events of the world is being forced, whether they like it or not, upon 80,000,000 Germans,' the article begins. 'It is brought about by the work of the Ministry of Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment which, under the control of Doctor Goebbels, controls the press, art, literature, wireless, and cinema in Germany, and sees to it that the German people hear only what their rulers regard as politically expedient.

'Since a few weeks after the Munich settlement England has engaged the unfavorable attention of the German Government and hence of the Propaganda Ministry to an ever-increasing extent.... Every medium of publicity is enlisted to convince

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the German people... that the official view of the neighbor across the North Sea was the true one. A ceaseless cannonade of propaganda before which even the stoutest reason must quail has now gone far towards doing this.

'In the present campaign against England which is regarded in official Germany as a bloodless war, these weapons [press and radio] were at the outset rendered sharper than ever by the opportunity, eagerly grasped by the authorities, of awakening the old dread of "encirclement" in the German people. Having once insured that this idea was firmly implanted in the popular mind, those who are responsible for forming the political opinions of the nation employed simultaneously two methods of attack, which have since formed the basis of their offensive. On the one hand, England is represented as treacherous, effete, cowardly, and incapable of defending her own interest, with an empire in a state of disintegration and collapse. On the other, a rascally, cunning John Bull is portrayed as preparing for war against a peaceful Germany and enlisting more or less against their will Frenchmen, Poles, and other peoples to shed their blood for British interests.'

The article then cites some striking examples of the distorted news dispatches sent from England by German correspondents to nourish the campaign of hate. It mentions particularly one series illustrated with photographs of anxious Englishmen having bullet-proof linings fitted to their bowler hats, 'as though this was a usual feature of modern English life.'

In conclusion the correspondent says:

'It is not easy to judge the general success of this official attempt to rouse hatred and contempt of England. Although the German people are in many ways easily led... a continuous



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barrage of abuse directed against one nation is more than many of them can stand. There is half-humorous, half-irritated talk of the "newspaper-war" and much citing of the German equivalent of the proverb that "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." So long as the real guns have not opened fire, what does it matter?

'But the effect of the campaign . . . is nevertheless perceptible. If war should come it would probably not be difficult to convince the majority of Germans that England had engineered the whole affair and that an innocent Germany had been attacked.'

If I and other correspondents had not been hypnotized by the myth of the war of nerves à la Munich, we should have realized from the scale and violence of the German campaign against England that Hitler was preparing for real war and that the war of nerves was only the preliminary bombardment. Certainly there was some psychological preparation for war in the French and British press, more in the Polish press, but there was no such organized campaign of hate against Germany. Though the democratic governments, exercising a discreet but nonetheless effective control over the organs of public opinion, discouraged any untimely manifestations of appeasement sentiment, they likewise discouraged alarmism and provocative statements about Germany. The radio under more direct state supervision was even more restrained. The dominant tone of the French press was anxiety as the following excerpts from my diary show:

*August 10*

'Suspense over Forster's speech was very noticeable here during the day. Papers full of speculation, will he, won't he? etc. Always the same thing, when is the lightning going to strike?

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Incredible how the British and French, especially the French, do Hitler's program for him. They see through his plan, but they fall for it anyway. Of course in the provinces people are not so hypnotized by the whole business as in the capital. . . . Not that the man in the street even here shows any sign of being perturbed as yet. The suspense is only in the newspapers — and on the Bourse, financial writers say that it was an important factor in the slowness of the market today.

'Headline in *L'Oeuvre* typical of the press reaction to Forster's speech: "The speech of Gauleiter Forster, though violently anti-Polish, does not announce immediate measures of force." Thank you, Gauleiter. Interesting details on alleged German propaganda plan from *Journal des Débats* attached.

'Vague peace rumors circulating. . . . Darrah sent a story last night that British were stalling with Russia and that a Five-Power conference — including Poland — might shortly meet to settle the Dantzig dispute — to Hitler's satisfaction. Lord Beaverbrook from Canada cables "No War."

'Learned from one of my informants the Quai d'Orsay has been lecturing the press on the proper line to take in the crisis. Polemics about foreign policy should be avoided. War or peace may depend upon how French, British, and American correspondents handle the news. Two trends absolutely fatal: either to write anything which would give the Germans the idea that the democracies are backing down or to exult about Hitler backing down. Hitler and Mussolini pictured as paranoiacs suffering simultaneously from delusions of grandeur and delusions of persecution. The right tone for the press: firm but polite.

'Striking thing about Forster's speech was that it seemed intended for foreign reading, not for whipping up the Dantzigers.

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Since it was prepared by Hitler himself, we may assume that he employed Forster chiefly for the purpose of introducing his propaganda themes into the French, British, and American press. (Here another striking example of how the conventions and technique of journalism in the democratic countries play into the hands of foreign propagandists: no use trying to bar Nazi tracts, stop whispering campaigns, etc., at home when columns of your newspapers are flooded with foreign propaganda at the source. Utilizing the foreign press is about 80 per cent of the art of governmental propaganda in these days and foreign correspondents are the principal carriers of it.) The world was waiting anxiously to see whether Forster was going to say something dangerous, therefore he was sure his propaganda points would at least be received, probably also he counted on the relief at the relative absence of violence to win him a more receptive attitude. A favorite Hitlerian technique, employed notably in his reply to Roosevelt last spring.'

Toward the middle of August the war of nerves was visibly increasing in intensity every day, and governmental propaganda methods became so blatantly aggressive that even the most conformist minds could hardly reconcile them with the official state of peace reigning in Europe. The war of nerves had become a reality, they were forced to admit, and peace was no longer anything but a juridical myth.

For instance in my diary for August 12 I included a detailed and seemingly trustworthy dispatch to *Le Temps* from its Warsaw correspondent describing how German agents in Poland were organizing a financial panic by smuggling zlotys out of the country. Attempts were also being made in France to exploit the crash

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of the Mendelssohn Bank, the 'bankers of France,' to the same end.

Another example was the appearance on a big scale of direct propaganda by tracts and pamphlets mailed or smuggled across frontiers. Fishermen off the Brittany coasts pulled up in their nets one day more than a hundred pounds of tracts written in French but printed in Germany and addressed to the Breton population.

'Why should Bretons die for Poland?' one of these tracts said. 'Aiding Poland will mean the death of 500,000 Bretons. Brittany invaded by an army of refugees, Negroes and Arabs, while your brothers and husbands are at the front — that means the end of everything Breton. Do the Poles deserve such a sacrifice from Brittany? No, twice no.'

By a strange coincidence the Breton autonomist paper *Breiz Atao* that same week ran an article on the Dantzig problem arguing that it did not concern France at all, but that England's jealousy of a commercial rival threatened to involve France in war over Dantzig.

'The good conformists who find it criminal that Bretons should die for Brittany,' concludes *Breiz Atao*, 'find it perfectly normal that they should die for Poland.'

A brand-new technique, borrowed from the British, was the sending of propaganda tracts or other messages to private individuals in hand-addressed envelopes. The tracts and messages all boiled down to the same idea, sometimes artfully elaborated and larded with quotations from French politicians and journalists: Why should Frenchmen die for Dantzig?

Stephen King-Hall, the British publicist, had inaugurated this form of direct-mail propaganda on the Germans a few weeks

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earlier, re-posted with an appropriate propaganda letter distributed to thousands of citizens of the Free City of Dantzig, no doubt with the unofficial approval and aid of the British Government.

In the next two weeks tens of thousands of similar propaganda epistles were mailed to France from Germany. Some Frenchmen likewise received little cardboard Swastika emblems and German agents were industriously chalking up Swastikas on the walls of Paris.

The standard weapons of the nerve-war, simultaneous rumors of war and peace, were likewise circulating thick and fast. At a semi-official press conference for the foreign press held by a state-subsidized news agency to which I subscribed I was told on August 12 to beware of reports from Berlin that the Reichstag had been convoked for the fifteenth, that grave military measures were impending, etc. The Quai d'Orsay I was told was not perturbed by these rumors, considered them merely as a part of the German psychological maneuver.

The real anxiety in Paris, I gathered, was about the conference at Salzburg between Ribbentrop and Ciano. The French seemed to fear it would end in some spectacular demonstration, probably agitation for sweeping treaty revision in southeastern Europe. Nazi propaganda in the Balkan and Danubian countries, according to French diplomatic reports, was becoming increasingly aggressive and dangerous and playing up frankly subversive themes. Whereas in the western countries Naziism was presented as a counter-revolutionary doctrine appealing to the 'élite,' in southeastern Europe it assumed a frankly revolutionary form, appealing to the illiterate, land-hungry peasantry.

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Another classic feature of the nerve-war, remembered from the previous summer, was the launching of the atrocity campaign against Poland in the German press. After intermittent bursts and lulls, the hate campaign in Germany really got under way around the middle of August. It was obviously intended to justify in advance a German attack on Poland, and according to some observers had the secondary object of working Hitler himself up to such a pitch of fury that he would be putty in the hands of the party extremists, who frankly wanted war.

Also about the same date the French papers gave German propaganda a helping hand by announcing the opening up of an intensive propaganda bombardment by radio on the French people, even giving the hours when the new German propaganda programs in French would be broadcast.

# VI

## IDEALS AS WEAPONS

The Salzburg Conference which so intrigued and agitated the democratic press toward the end of the second week of August calls attention to a particularly grave aspect of psychological warfare: the fabrication by propaganda of emotionally potent ideologies for the sole purpose of using them as political or diplomatic arms. For in the war of nerves the French and British were not simply pitted against Germany, but against a geographical-ideological complex.

This was the Rome-Berlin-Tokio triangle, or more accurately the international fascist front of Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, and Hungary. Diplomatically, it was not a real system of alliances. Its juridical basis was the anti-Comintern Pact, a vague Holy Alliance against communism. The adherents of the triangle undertook no specific reciprocal obligations for the case of war and they could not always synchronize perfectly their diplomatic activities, but they were allies in the war of nerves. As a bluffing weapon the triangle had tremendous value. For the French it raised the bugbear of attack on three fronts, and for the British the bugbear of an attack on imperial positions in the Far East while the fleet was tied up in the West.

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There was more than this to the triangle, however. It was the fusion of similar political ideologies dominated by the most dynamic of them, the Nazi ideology. The triangle had a personality of its own, a definite political and world philosophy, a *mystique*, as the French say. The immediate propaganda slogans of the group might vary. The latest Axis or triangle doctrine, developed in Italy, the transposition of the Marxist class struggle to the international plane through the myth of proletarian versus capitalist nations, was not popular with all the emotional adherents of the triangle, notably those living in 'capitalist' nations. Neither was anti-Semitism, but proclaiming anti-Semitism was in a sense the totemistic initiation into the totalitarian tribe. It was one of the propaganda devices by which the Nazis exploited ideological sympathies and harnessed them to a purely German cause.

Thanks to the emotional appeal of the authoritarian-collectivist *mystique*, Germany had enthusiastic allies or accomplices all over the world; and the cleverness of the German psychological strategists was to utilize these pro-Nazi groups and movements so as to provoke the disintegration of the societies in which they existed.

The British and French likewise had an official ideology which they tried to exploit as a political weapon: the ideology of democracy and of collective security. America for all practical purposes was a member of the democratic front in the war of nerves, and Russia was still thought of as a putative ally. The democratic front, however, lacked the dynamism of the fascist front. The ideology of collective security had been scuppered by the British and French themselves at Geneva. The *mystique* of democracy which had won a world war for them was a little



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worn now. Important reactionary elements in both countries felt more sympathy for fascism than for democracy. Even the elements which were unshakably loyal to democratic ideals were so largely from force of habit; there was little of the missionary spirit left in them. Democracy everywhere was on the defensive, questioning itself, and even so dynamic a leader as Roosevelt could not blow any enthusiasm into the democratic front.

Hence the alarm over the conference of Salzburg. Actually Salzburg opened a fissure in the fascist front. Ciano discovered that Hitler was determined on war, and was not prepared to follow him along that path. We could not be sure of this at the time, however, and the following excerpts from my diary reflect a point of view which was soon destined to be outdated:

*August 14*

‘Whatever its real purpose may have been, the Salzburg Conference which ended yesterday has turned the spotlight more than ever on the Axis stage and has kept the public abroad hanging in suspense on the decisions of the dictators. Between the lines of interminable speculation about the meeting in the French press I see clearly the unspoken fear that some irrevocable decision has been or is about to be taken. In so far as they depend upon intimidation it is obvious that the reputation for aggressiveness and irresponsibility which the two fascist dictators have built up is their trump card. It is they, not we, who are masters of peace and war. In affairs like this, diplomatic and military pageantry rather than straight propaganda seems their main psychological weapon, so that the foreign press actually makes most of their propaganda for them, at least creates the emotional atmosphere in which the suggestions put out by their propaganda

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agents, either in the form of whispering campaigns or press articles, radio programs or tracts, has the maximum effect.

‘It seems to me that the Axis powers have launched a triple maneuver: (1) accentuate the menace; (2) increase the scope and extent of the Axis demands; (3) throw out feelers for a negotiation. The first sector is adequately managed in Berlin by actual military measures and by off-the-record comments or hints to foreign correspondents and by the tone of the German press. Even the most sober French correspondents now begin to reflect a real war scare. The papers for the last two days are full of suggestions for an Italian or papal mediation, a conference or a negotiation based on Hitler’s supposed offer to Burckhardt, who may emerge as the Runciman of Dantzig with the rôle of putting the Poles in the wrong. The rumors of a five-power conference, etc., mostly originate in London papers; in view of Darrah’s story last week I assume they are being put out by pro-Axis or appeasement elements in England. The credit they get in the French press comes from the supposed reluctance of Mussolini and the rumored divergence between him and Hitler. The really interesting thing about this conference talk is that it opens an almost imperceptible fissure in French opinion. The *Munichois* or pro-fascist papers play up the conference rumors and expatiate with evident complacency on Mussolini’s need and longing to play the rôle of mediator. They don’t come out frankly in favor of accepting such mediation, but they evidently like the idea. The “bellicist” papers, on the other hand, are alarmed. “Beware of the trap,” they say. Can this fissure be widened into a polemical gulf as last September? Get the French fighting among themselves or with their allies; that is the real German goal.’

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August 15

'The first taint of Munichism which has been in the atmosphere the last few days becomes very pronounced, though as might be expected the menace from the east seems stronger than ever. One thing is perfectly clear at least; this is that the peace talk and particularly Burckhardt's summons to Berchtesgaden are not just German trial balloons. The French and British Governments have been concealing the fact that they are definitely interested in the Burckhardt maneuver even if they did not arrange it. The stories by the diplomatic correspondents in the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* today, despite the studiedly casual tone, clearly indicate that there is an intense interest in the Burckhardt deal. They reveal for the first time that the British Government as a member of the committee of three was informed by Burckhardt of his invitation from Hitler and approved his departure. Guy Eden in the *Express* says, "Importance attaches to Burckhardt's visit because I understand he was fully informed on the British Government's policy just before he went." That looks definitely like collusion. The *Daily Express* correspondent in Berlin says there is reason to believe that the British Government was informed of the supposed Mussolini peace plan when Sir Percy Lorraine called on Ciano before the latter's departure for Salzburg. Same source says Burckhardt was present during Berchtesgaden talk between Ciano and Hitler.

'Now let's see how various governments stand on this Burckhardt affair: The *Times* and *Telegraph* let you divine the story between the lines. The *Express*, taking an optimistic line and playing up the story, gives away nearly everything, adding the report, "Burckhardt coming to see Halifax personally."

'In Paris nothing is known except what is reprinted from the

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British press. There is no indication that the Polish Government was informed. Irritation of the Polish press suggests the contrary. The Polish official comment today is that Burckhardt only brought back a plan for purely local settlement of customs, etc., in the framework of a statute of Dantzig. The *Kurjer Warszawski*, moderate Opposition paper, calls Burckhardt "the flying and talkative commissioner." German public likewise not informed about Burckhardt. *Temps* editorial suggests sensational new development impending, but doesn't make clear whether in direction of war or peace. *L'Ordre* reports unmistakable public relief in both Rome and Berlin at belief Salzburg talks have at least postponed war.'

August 16

'Roughly speaking, the Axis maneuver combining a "peace offensive" with a sharp accentuation of the military menace and the frontier tension between Poland and Germany continues along the classic lines, and is correctly interpreted as such by virtually the whole press here and in England — with the exception of the *Daily Express*, which takes the peace talk literally and goes the whole hog for appeasement with a story from Dantzig by Delmar, hinting that it comes from Burckhardt himself, presenting the Führer as being full of good intentions. Today the totalitarian peace *motif* is put across in several ways: (1) Ham Fish's Oslo bombshell proposing a thirty-day "armistice" and a four-power conference. Fish admits having lunched with Ribbentrop at Salzburg on the fourteenth, but claims Ribbentrop did not particularly encourage him with the "armistice" plan, which is his own idea. Maybe he is sincere and is just being taken in. (2) Similar peace plan attributed to the Pope by the Belgian

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paper *L'Indépendance Belge*. Fish also credits the Pope with having same idea. (3) Encouraging comments and evidence of reasonable attitude on part of the Nazi press officials reflected in *Times* correspondent's dispatch from Berlin. There can be no doubt about the Axis origin of some at least of the peace suggestions, though the question is complicated by outbursts of appeasement like that of the *Daily Express*, which may or may not have an Axis inspiration.

'According to some of the dispatches from Berlin, Ribbentrop is optimistic about wearing down the French and British resistance on Dantzig. This seems to be corroborated by the flood of propaganda literature pouring into France through the mails trying to persuade the French that Dantzig is not their concern.

'The official reaction here to this tactic is interesting. Of course they see through it and are unshakable, etc., but they are in agreement with Hitler and Goebbels to keep the issue limited to Dantzig, and their peace efforts are concentrated on obtaining a local settlement. The official note this evening was optimism due to negotiations being resumed in Dantzig over the local issues. Along with this, considerable irritation with Poles for "putting fire to powder" by attacks on Burckhardt. Notice too how the *Daily Express* puts Beck in the light of a trouble-maker. Young man at agency conference had a number of ironical references about "margarine conflict" in Dantzig; wonder if a few days from now these are going to emerge as defeatist propaganda slogans? It looks to me as though the attitude of the British and French Governments toward these Dantzig negotiations were very like their attitude toward Czechoslovakia last year. They insist it must be within the framework of the present statute of a free city, just as Runciman was supposed to be working inside

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the framework of a Czech state. But they obviously attach undue importance to these local negotiations and pretend to ignore that it is just a German maneuver. There is only a local issue because Berlin orders one. Now this can mean only one of two things: either they are going to give up Dantzig or they are sitting back simply waiting for the Germans to take the initiative of breaking the peace. They are obviously not trying to stop them for the present.'

August 17

'First real outburst of Munichism yet seen: the *Times* editorial today. The suggestion that the Polish authorities should recognize Forster is very significant. The whole tenor of the article recalls story last spring suggesting some kind of League investigation for Dantzig. This is the first open indication of willingness for a conference over Dantzig if direct negotiations break down that I have yet seen. An amazing statement in the *Times* editorial that press attacks against Poland and England have died down, at the same time that the *Express* cites *Angriff* gibe about only desirable meeting with British being one on the Siegfried Line. Visit of Winston Churchill and General Spears to the Maginot Line recalls a similar visit last year when they tried to break up the appeasement gang here.

'Saw Barnes at the Embassy; he doesn't think British or French will falter, sees no signs of Munichism. Doesn't think Hitler necessarily determined to make war, but that he's taken a stand on Dantzig from which he can't back down. Therefore situation very grave.

'My diplomatic informant announces that real crisis is now considered unlikely before end of September. Hitherto we have

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been told that it was to be in the second half of August. Interesting that it officially recedes into the distance on the very day when so many symptoms of appeasement are cropping up. Of course the explanation we are given is that Italians and Germans aren't ready, that morale is very bad, especially in Italy, etc. One Quai d'Orsay mouthpiece even goes so far as to say that the situation is exactly the reverse of last year: it is the German and Italian people which are panic-stricken, while France and England are perfectly calm and determined.

'Rambling on, he says the German propaganda services have made a bad mistake in reprinting the threats, etc., in the Polish press; gives the German people the idea that the Poles would not be so insolent unless they were backed up by France and England. Somebody suggests the French press is making the same mistake with German propaganda. Our spokesman doesn't think so; points out that French papers are maintaining a sort of "auto-censorship" to keep from repeating mistakes of last year.

'Listened to German propaganda broadcast at 10.25 P.M. They quoted *L'Action Française* on relations between the Jew Manneheimer, banker of France, and Reynaud. Then rather wittily cited the mistake of a French journalist recently calling Halifax the foreign minister of France and used this to urge the French people to shake off the British yoke and adopt a policy of co-operation with Germany as best basis for world peace. The voice was pleasant and persuasive and the French flawless. Very polite. Broadcast based on press comment, but much more direct appeal than ordinary news broadcasts.

'A friend vacationing in Brittany reports Breton autonomist movement gaining considerable strength owing to anti-war sentiment in Brittany.'

## IDEALS AS WEAPONS

August 18-19

'The short-lived and relative optimism of the other day has given place to a new wave of pessimism. Though the state radio in France warns listeners not to be impressed by alarmist rumors, the Quai d'Orsay last night and tonight makes no effort to hide its pessimism. Berlin correspondents likewise very gloomy. Only old Robert Dell still insists there will be a capitulation and not war.

'Where does all this gloom come from? Berlin, as the press dispatches show. Correspondents and diplomatic observers think that the press campaign against Poland has reached such a pitch of intensity that it cannot be abandoned without war or the capitulation of the enemy. The *Times* correspondent in Berlin, however, reports that there are "no evident signs that this propaganda has filled the German people with enthusiasm for war with Poland. The frame of mind at present is rather one of worried apathy than of martial ardor." Learn from Alex Small that Burckhardt was advised by Hitler to send his wife and children out of Dantzig, which sounds bad.

'The French papers report a remarkable new German propaganda tactic. The Nazis apparently are trying to give morale a tonic by a whispering campaign about a secret agreement between Germany and Russia. Opinion here is getting a little worried about the slowness of the diplomatic negotiations in Moscow.'

August 20

"Tannenberg week, critical week" — "Crisis expected to reach culminating point this week." This was the *leit-motif* of the French press today. They apparently are impressed by the



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dark hints the Axis press has been throwing out in the last few days. Two "predestined" events stand out on the horizon of the next few days like omens of doom: the visit of the cruiser *Koenigsberg* to Dantzig Friday, and Hitler's speech at Tannenberg next Sunday. Given the present atmosphere, this is enough to work up a fine state of suspense. The same process has been going on since March, but the breathing-spell between the crisis peaks is getting shorter, like labor pains as the term approaches. Another ominous sign: the reappearance in the German press of the propaganda theme of "German honor" which we heard so much about last September.

'So far there is no sign of anything like panic here, but I fear there will be soon. People, however, are not so much haunted by the dread of air raids. They know Paris is better defended than last year.

'Announcement from Berlin of a trade agreement with Russia is another telling shot, and especially valuable for internal propaganda as tending to confirm the whispering campaign about a secret agreement with the Bolsheviks.'

The next night, August 21, Berlin announced that Ribbentrop was going to Moscow to sign a non-aggression pact with the Soviets, who were supposed in Paris and London to be on the point of signing a treaty of alliance with France and England. This was the perfect example of Hitler's theory of psychological bombardment replacing artillery preparation before an offensive. It was intended by shock and surprise, like a hurricane bombardment, to paralyze the enemy, shatter his will-to-resist. From evidence now available it seems certain that Germany and Russia have been in agreement in principle since early in the summer

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and that Hitler deliberately waited until this moment to spring his psychic bombshell because the attack on Poland was already ordered for the end of August and he did not want the shock effect to wear off before the attack started.

This of course was the most dramatic moment in the war of nerves, as well as a turning-point in the history of the European mind. I think that the following excerpt from my wife's diary brings out vividly the drama as it was felt by millions of human beings in Europe:

‘Ed and I went out to the Petit Riche for dinner. The *bourgeois* was exceptionally smooth, and the garlic on the *champignons grillés* had that smell that would make you homesick for France wherever you smelt it. It was a good dinner and we talked of this and that, and there was an English girl on the seat opposite who giggled a great deal, while all the French people around her looked at her with tolerant and slightly disapproving amusement.

‘Back in the office we listened to the various news broadcasts. There was a British propaganda broadcast in German, a lazy, deep British voice talking in colloquial German, with a pipe between its teeth. It described a peaceful summer evening in an English village, and the kind of talk the lads were having over their pint of beer, and what they thought about a war, and about the Nazis and how slow to rouse but slow to pacify the bulldog breed was. It quoted Hitler on how astonished he had been when he found himself face to face with those Tommies and Scotties, during the war, because that was not at all how the German funny papers had described them.

‘Then I switched over to Leipzig and there voices were singing soldiers’ marching songs, a rasping, jerky march. But the voices

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were fresh young male voices. Silly fools! On Stuttgart there was a German propaganda broadcast in French. A slightly fussy, very French voice spoke, with a Parisian accent. It used the same phrases, the same intonations as the French news speakers did. It talked of Polish atrocities. One German woman had been tortured with firetongs. (How?) Another one had been pursued up to the German border by those bloodhounds the Poles were now using against Germans and had been seen lying there utterly *zerfleischt* by the beasts. So here too we've got to the bloodhound stage! I remembered Douglas Reed's quotation about the red hounds on the Madrid front. We all seem to have a Hound of the Baskervilles in our atavistic imagination.

'Presently press wireless called up and gave Ed a wire over the phone. Sigrid Schultz was informing us that Ribbentrop had left by plane for some unknown destination. Not Rome. That kept us guessing for some time. All those we called up seemed to know nothing about it. We all three, Ed and I and his assistant Maurice English, sat about the office, vaguely nervous, toying with pencils, exchanging remarks. Music was coming over the radio: chamber music.

'Suddenly I was on my feet by the radio. "Shut up!" I yelled at the men. They looked at me in alarm. The music was coming over again. Yet something had been said. It was still echoing inside me. It was an urgent, harassed voice saying: "*Deutschlandssender spezial Ausgabe...nicht Angriffspakt mit Russland. Herr von Ribbentrop wird am 23 August in Moskau erwartet.*"

"Moscow," I breathed. "He's gone to Moscow."

'Then they said, "It can't be; you've made a mistake." But I could still hear the ring of that quick, breathless sentence in

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my ears. The dial of the radio was still on Stuttgart. It was 11.20 P.M. So they rang up people, very guardedly. Maybe it was a German propaganda stunt: a specially potent shot of nerve-poison. Maybe after all I had dreamt it. Maybe the nerve-war was getting me. At a quarter to twelve the last English news broadcast came through. Deep boom of Big Ben. Then a cultured English voice: "An official German communiqué tonight announces..." Well, I had not heard voices, after all. It was true. It was official.

'Months before when we had talked of this eventuality, we had agreed that that would be the end of all, the worst thing that could possibly happen, the thing that would ultimately mean a terrible war, or a hopeless capitulation, and a fascist Europe shortly afterward. Now it had happened.

'I felt a kind of elation. Now there was no shilly-shallying. Now we were on the brink of the end of the world. Now we must fight. Now it had got to a kind of medieval fresco, "the forces of good against the forces of evil." No more question now of fighting the war for the Jews, or the Communists, or the war-mongers, or the munitioners. Now we would have to fight for our skins. This world would have to bust now; the times were ripe and we must do all we can, especially survive, and reconstruct afterward. Last September a deadly fear had been in my bones. I could not think of any future, because I felt sure we would be killed and buried under the ruins of all those things we loved, and anyway what was the use of living when Notre Dame and the Concorde and our lovely flat would be blown sky-high? Now I am not afraid of being killed any more. I have that feeling of invulnerability that all good soldiers have, I suppose. As for Notre Dame, what good would she be, standing in a world where no one would be

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left to understand her? Better that she should go and that men remain so that they still have it in them to build cathedrals.'

From my diary of the same date:

'Called Jacques Grumback [a French Socialist journalist], who likewise confirmed the news. He seemed completely staggered, said it was catastrophic, meant that Dantzig would be taken over in a couple of days. Was raging against the Quai d'Orsay for not saying anything. Got Bullitt on the phone for a second while he was waiting for a call from Washington. He appeared to have his nerves under control as usual, but his voice sounded tired and depressed. As to consequences he merely said dryly it was a great encouragement to Hitler. Told David Scott and Nick Bodington of Reuter's, who were frankly skeptical. Scott's first reaction when belief began to dawn was amusement at the picture of British admirals and generals in Moscow sitting there with their monocles goggling. My reaction and Vreni's and English's the same: the bottom has fallen out; now we must fight for our lives.

'How completely the French were caught by surprise is shown by the editorial in *L'Oeuvre* trying to prove that the German-Soviet trade accord had no political significance, followed by a pathetic P.S. cancelling all that.

'Before the blow fell I had written a cable about the increased gravity of the situation, the somber, determined tone of the press, the impending French mobilization. Our Embassy had military intelligence reports from Berlin that German motorized units had received marching orders and would be in a position to strike by Friday.

'Darrah, however, says that in London they are not particu-

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larly alarmed or pessimistic. He still doesn't believe the British or French will fight for Dantzig.

'Announced over the radio that the Germans have organized two military propaganda units, one for the air army, the other for the land army, both under the direction of specialists from the press bureau. These units have already held test exercises in connection with the army maneuvers.'

In the first moments of shock no one thought of the ideological implications of the German-Soviet pact. Later both the leaders of the democratic front and the leaders of the fascist front tried to minimize them. The French and British for strategic reasons did not want a clean break with Russia; the Germans did not want to lose all their support in Italy, Spain, and Japan. Official propaganda on both sides therefore tried to gloss over the psychic revolution, but without much success. The contrast between doctrine and practice was too glaring, too cynical. For a few days the Communist press in France, organs like *L'Humanité* and *Ce Soir*, tried to keep alive the myth of an anti-fascist front, by tortuous arguments seeking to prove that it was Stalin's 'firmness' which had made this Soviet triumph possible, and that Chamberlain and Daladier had only to imitate him to achieve the same result. This was a little too casuistical even for Communists, who were accustomed to a rapid turnover in doctrines.

In Italy and Spain the official propaganda machines continued under pressure from Berlin to grind out the fascist equivalent of this casuistry, but the almost religious enthusiasm which the new Holy Alliance against communism had aroused rapidly evaporated.

In Germany there was considerable bewilderment but not

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despair, because it was more and more clear that the German people like all others hated war and they believed for a few days that Hitler's diplomatic master-stroke would avert war.

In France there were both bewilderment and despair. The blow fell most heavily on the extreme Right and the extreme Left, but even average citizens who had never worked up any religious enthusiasm for either the communist or the fascist ideal felt disillusioned and bewildered by contagion. One of the springs of morale had snapped.

Between 1930 and 1939 the menace to civilization had seemed to lie in the barbarous, uncouth political ideals which were winning the masses. Now, after Munich and Moscow, after the hypocritical betrayals of innumerable democratic statesmen and the brazen betrayal of Hitler and Stalin, the greater menace seemed to be the inability of the masses henceforth to believe in any ideal at all; only brute violence could rule over masses of moral nihilists.

On a homely and personal plane, this is the point of view from which my wife writes in the following excerpt from her diary:

*August 22*

'Driving out to Harriet Downs's for lunch, Agnes Knickerbocker and I gloat over events. Agnes is full of *schadenfreude* for her "pinko" friends. Knick and Agnes could not refrain from calling up Louis Fischer in the middle of the night. He was vague and pretty fed up. I don't feel pleased about the undoing for the pinkos, at least those that were not self-righteous about it. After all I am pretty much of a pinko myself, although I had given up my rebellious sympathy for communism quite long ago. Yet I consider myself as being on the Left, since being a

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real, revolutionary democrat is considered subversive. As a matter of fact I had not thought about having *schadenfreude* for anyone except the philo-fascist "nice people," the "people of good family." They really include the ruling classes everywhere. The only trouble is that most of them never came out as Fascists, they only secretly admired them and thanked their stars that there were some people to fight the Communists for them. They may not have been openly for them, but they never compromised themselves with anyone who was against them.

'After all, the great danger was that Communist under the bed. Now they can laugh at the likes of us. People like Léon Bailby can laugh at us. *Fils de famille* can laugh at us. Luckily the blow falls heavily on the extreme Left, but equally on the extreme Right. The ones that gain are we. That is, if there is not another sell-out, and then fascism will soon be on top of us all. No, I don't feel ironical toward the pro-Communists, the sincere ones. Agnes of course was thinking of Lee Stowe's telling her, "Oh, you know, in New York all the best people are on the Left." I don't feel ironical about the Requetes in Spain either. It's very bitter to find you have been led down the garden path, especially when it has involved a lot of dying and killing.

'We passed by many factories. On the Quai de la Seine, in Suresne, the workmen were eating their lunches sitting by the river. Very few of them had any papers. They seemed to enjoy the sun. I thought of how they would feel when they read *L'Humanité* next. Now that anti-fascism and communism have been dissociated, will they remain anti-Fascists or Communists?

'At lunch we became domestic, womanly, and talked babies. Harriet has two lovely children. She does not know whether to take them to America, and resign herself not to see Ken for years.



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or stay over here, with Ken, but risk the children's safety or health. There we are. The monster war has broken down the barriers of our private life once more and is trampling around in the flower-beds.

'I went into town in the evening, and a lovely evening it was — the air was light, and sonorous as a gong; summer dresses and flags were fluttering in the wind. But as I got to the center of town I recognized that subdued frenzy, that tremulous intensity that grips the streets when the fear of war is on them. The evening papers were out and small crowds stood around the little stands on the pavement, looking down on the piles of Paris *Soirs* with that look of loathing that people have who stand around the victim of a street accident. Men walked through the traffic, their eyes on the screaming front pages, while brakes screeched a chauffeur's curse. Others were going by with glazed eyes and mumbling lips, having feverish dialogues with themselves. Women had hard, unseeing eyes. High-cackling American girls swept past, elated by the atmosphere. In a few days' time they will all be milling around the Embassy complaining loudly of the war, and there will be a special train, a special boat for them, and they will have time to visit the Louvre before the war breaks out.'

From my diary:

*August 23*

'I guess we're in for it now. All day I've been trying to argue against war, but talking to Darrah on the phone tonight has shaken me. He still thinks there is a lot of propaganda about it all and isn't yet convinced that war is coming, but admits it looks pretty gloomy. The British apparently have their backs

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up. Yet last night Dave sent a story declaring that the communiqué after the cabinet meeting meant England was going to let Poland down. Tourists getting pretty panicky; see my story tonight. The Quai is still clinging to the hope that all is not lost in Moscow, but very few take it seriously. X——, just back from vacation, thought it was going toward another Munich early in the day. Said he's talked to Mandel, who revealed that yesterday's cabinet meeting was very bad, Bonnet white as a ghost without any nerve, and very few of the ministers prepared to back Daladier up in taking the strong line. Embassy says this absolutely contradicts all their information. Later in evening X—— also became pessimistic — said Poles standing firm.

'At Press Club Ruttle, *Exchange Telegraph* man from Berlin, arrived this morning and is still in a terrible state of jitters. If Germans have been bluffing, it's the most systematic job ever known in history. Ruttle said a few days ago a high German general told him, "Chamberlain is either an imbecile or a criminal to be off fishing at a time like this." Ruttle says the Nazis are absolutely confident; don't care much whether England and France come in or not; they will blow their morale to bits in a short time with their superior aviation. They will absolutely wipe London and other English cities off the map.

'Louis Fischer also spoke at the Press Club, said German-Soviet pact was a terrible blow, terrible encouragement to aggression. Even said it was "criminal" to make such an alliance at such a time. Seemed very despondent. Many people today going around declaiming that war is absolute mathematical certainty. Morale doesn't seem very bright here, now that people beginning to realize what is really on foot . . . *fleur au fusil* spirit even less conspicuous than last fall . . . judging by my own morale fighting

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spirit not high . . . it just seems hopeless either way . . . licked before you start . . . and persistence of belief in last-minute miracle which seems generally deadly to a spirit of virile resolution . . . Government and Quai in particular partly responsible for this.'

August 24

'Publication of the terms of the Russo-German pact was almost as much of a bombshell as the news that it was going to be signed. Everyone had the same reaction: No doubt about it now, Stalin has committed a deliberate act of treachery; *le coup de Leipzig*. Aragon and Darnar continue to celebrate it with a cynical hypocrisy which has to be seen to be believed. A few hours later, at the beginning of the afternoon came the next hammer-blow — Forster's *coup* in Dantzig. For a few hours in the afternoon the winds of panic blew strong. Warning to United States citizens to leave — advice to French citizens to take advantage of railway facilities while they last to leave for the country. Taxis piled with baggage and belongings pouring out of the gates, in the streets scurrying citizens with parcels tied by trembling fingers. The familiar mass-drama at the Gare de l'Est. Many natives still don't take it seriously, sure it will all blow over like last fall. Intelligent ones like François Long, though, say, "*Cette fois, ça y est.*" The usual interminable and meaningless arguments with colleagues. For some stupid reason I argued if there was no break in the tension in the next twenty-four hours nothing can stop war. Others argued more reasonably if nothing irreparable happens in the next forty-eight hours maybe we will have a chance. On the whole I don't see any signs of real demoralization among the French, and the Soviet treason has

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dulled the edge of ideological bickering. Nearly everybody, I think, would like to see a little Munich if it would avert war, but all seem to think a major capitulation like the other Munich out of the question. The great preoccupation seems to be: If only the Poles will be careful and hold off for a couple of days, regardless of provocations, maybe the diplomats can get the cannons tied up in juridical red tape. Germans apparently realized this, because their radio and agency messages bombarded us all night with reports of an imminent Polish attack on Dantzig and sinister assurances that decisive measures would come out of the Führer's deliberations in Berlin. Rumor that the Nazis would invade Poland at dawn heard everywhere, and further mobilization here was expected after midnight but apparently hasn't come off.'

*August 25*

'Outwardly today was the blackest day of the crisis. Not only private individuals and families are fleeing, but all throughout the day in the business quarters I noticed moving vans being filled up with equipment and archives as offices are being transferred to emergency quarters in the smaller towns. The French mobilization continues unabated; in the afternoon I learned from a friend that men of categories five and six are being called up by individual notice. Phone communications with Germany completely cut for a while in the evening. In the evening a violent radio speech by Hess calling Chamberlain an "old fool" — followed by the announcement that all German boats on the high seas, including the *Bremen*, had been recalled by radio, and then the news of Tannenberg's being cancelled.

'Yet there is a subtle and deep change in the emotional atmosphere. For the first time in several days I feel perfectly calm and

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cheerful; in fact I am rather beginning to enjoy the crisis. It seems to me that many of the people I met today were reacting in the same way. Some of the younger reservists I saw in the streets were quite boisterous.

'I see two factors in this improved morale: First, the war now seems so close and real that everybody is preparing to adjust himself to it, no longer just taking precautions to escape a hypothetical danger. Thus the reservist who has been sitting around grim and shaking for three days, hoping that he won't be called up, becomes boisterous the moment he puts on a uniform and signs over all responsibility for his existence to the antique consortium in charge of binding and cutting. Thus the correspondents who have been worrying about whether they should follow the Government out of town in a mad last-minute stampede or stay to catch the bombs felt relieved when Bressy told us this evening the Quai was fixing up a nice collective office for us in the center of town, bomb-catching facilities not specified.

'There is another almost contradictory factor, though: the feeling that it is all a scenario. Roosevelt's peace messages published here this afternoon helped strengthen this feeling. Everybody remembering last year, it seemed like history repeating itself. A very large proportion of the native population still watches the approaching tornado with a skeptical eye, firmly convinced it is nothing but a conjuror's trick, or rather a conspiracy of all the governments against the "*cochons de payants*." Someone told me about a worker elaborating on this view and expressing considerable disapproval of the whole business on the ground it would have a disastrous effect on pregnant women throughout the land. Still, everyone agrees that, conspiracy or not, we must resist.

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'Myself, not being French, I cannot quite accept the theory of an inter-governmental conspiracy against the ease and nerves of the citizens, but I am reassured to see the familiar scenario artifices appearing at the expected places. It convinces me that the war of nerves is still on. Hitler is still obviously trying to scare us. The *démarche* in Berlin calling in the French, British, Italian, and Japanese ambassadors today likewise is part of the scenario. According to the Quai mouthpieces, Hitler told Coullondre that he would not tolerate another border incident and would only forego war if given everything he asked. I wrote this is a repetition of the Godesberg ultimatum last year. We hear that Henderson is flying back to London to report, and there are indications that the Führer left the door open to negotiations in his talk with the British Ambassador. All this is classic, setting the war machine in movement, then at the last minute holding up a slight, ever so slight hope of peace, provided everybody gives in. It confirms my original view that Hitler is not seeking either war or peace, but the demoralization of his adversaries.

'Talking with Charlie Sweeney about his new volunteer brigade, about which I sent story tonight, Sweeney said his reason told him there would be war, but he had a hunch there would not.

'*Le Jour* reported Laval left for Rome, but am reliably informed that according to police reports Laval had merely gone to the Puy de Dome.'

From my wife's diary:

August 25

'We hire another car in case of "an emergency." People in the streets very subdued, but it seems that the news has been so

## STRATEGY OF TERROR

bad that it has induced fatalism in them. I notice that even with poor red-eyed Marguerite. She has fallen into the dull waiting and brooding of war days. "*A la grâce de Dieu*" now.

'In the afternoon I try to escape from war jitters by doing various jobs, such as buying electric torches in view of the black-outs. The face of Paris has changed completely, and there is no need for a reporter's imagination to see that. The town is very empty, and all those who have remained have a feeling of solidarity. People exchange glances in the streets ("So you are staying too") — or they guess what lies behind an anguished look, and feel sympathetic. Groups form around newspaper kiosks, and the crowds waiting for the rare busses seethe with conversations. Spontaneous indignation meetings of two or three people, workers often, about the Communist attitude. Taxis, busses, private cars, piled high with luggage, hurtle through the streets. Tourists have disappeared. In a shop off Saint-Philippe du Roule smart, anglicized-looking French family buys gas masks, while Hispano and chauffeur wait outside. A dark-eyed little girl with a sullen look watches her blushing brother being fitted with a snout while the mother fussily inquires, "*Ça ne passera pas?*" And the shopgirl smilingly assures her that these are very well-fitting masks. One sees many people carrying their gas masks home.

'It is not a good idea for one with war jitters to visit the Left Bank; the sight of Notre Dame, with doors locked because the stained-glass windows are being put away, predisposes one to sentimental and slightly hysterical *scènes d'adieu*. Going by the railway stations is not a good idea, either. The expression of certain faces seen for a fleeting moment is unbearable. Already many have that bewildered, uprooted look of refugees. Especially

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some very old people. There are also taxi-loads of owl-eyed children, struck dumb with excitement. They of course love it.

'Symptoms of patient suffering from war-expectation: unquenchable thirst and hollow stomach, perpetual restlessness, characteristic inability to keep hands off radio or newspapers for more than half an hour, exaggerated sensibility to the rumors of the world about, constant feverish monologue, feeling of tenseness of the muscles, and occasional attacks of theatrics when there is no one to see them, such as wailing, "I can't bear it! I can't bear it!" when driving through town in a car. Whiskey helps.'

From my diary:

*August 26-27*

'Hitler may be set on war, probably is, but he is still obviously trying to get as much as he can by psychological methods. Having made the threat of war just as real and immediate as it can possibly be made, having brought home the menace to each individual so that everyone is obliged to reckon with it as a personal problem, he stands with the lightning suspended in his right hand, keeping us waiting. Lest the strain on our nerves relax, each day, at least once a day, there is some new gesture or hint from Berlin that the hour has struck and the lightning is about to fall.

'Yesterday, for instance, after twenty-four hours of relative calm, Alex told me in what may have been our last telephone communication that the pall was settling again over Warsaw, they feared a German ultimatum for this evening. This morning we awoke to find nothing had happened in the east, and the decisive moment will come when Henderson has returned to Berlin with



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the British answer to the Führer's propositions. And the answer had better not be delayed too long, Berlin hints darkly.

'Simultaneously, in accordance with the technique of the *douche écossaise*, the flashes in the eastern skies are interspersed with little rifts of hope. When Hitler saw the ambassadors Friday he simply delivered a tirade to Coulondre while he made something like concrete proposals to Henderson. Similarly when he replied tonight to Daladier's appeal for another attempt at conciliation delivered by Coulondre last night, he closed the door completely on one passage but the English door still remains ajar pending Henderson's return. And Mussolini is still to be held in reserve. Therefore I conclude that the statements of respective positions in these various diplomatic exchanges constitute a phase of the German psychological maneuver, though each one, by reducing the possibilities of an arrangement *in extremis* which would not be a complete capitulation for one side or the other, increases the danger of war.

'Only sign of Munichism in the press is the hopeful scanning of the southern skies for some sign of a black-shirted or black-robed *deus ex machina*. Reports that the British cabinet is divided on the answer to Hitler. Bonnet displays blackest pessimism to French press. William Henry Chamberlain still strong for appeasement, judging by tennis-court conversation. Sanford now thinks Treaty of Versailles wasn't stiff enough and wants Germans torn limb from limb. Speculation as to whether Hitler will bomb Paris right away or only later; most correspondents seem to think later. Deep undercurrents of pacifism, and if marching morale among reservists and general population is good — which it obviously is — I think this is mainly due to the belief that Hitler wants all Europe and so must be stopped now rather than

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later. Daladier has them well in hand, but any break in the tension might produce a pacifist stampede, it seems to me. Idea that it is just a scenario is rapidly wearing off but still traces of it left.

‘Spent last night and most of this morning getting my secretary out of clink, where she had been thrown for asking damn-fool questions at Gare Montparnasse and not having papers in order. Not surprised cops suspicious; I understand that over two hundred spies and other German agents have been nabbed in the last few weeks.

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‘Sigrid Schultz’s cable from Berlin to the *Chicago Tribune* to-night began as follows:

“‘The cry of ‘Extra! Extra!’ resounded for the first time in this year’s crisis on the busy thoroughfares of Berlin today. The staid DAZ published this extra with the heading: ‘German Secretary of State Stuckhardt fired at by Poles. Thirty-two Germans slaughtered by Poles.’

“‘While popular anger is whipped to frenzy by these reports, feverish negotiations are being carried on between Hitler and the British, French, and Italian Ambassadors.”

‘Paris *Soir* from Strasbourg publishes the following picturesque footnote on the nerve-war:

“‘In the printed program of the Munich radio station last week appeared the announcement that on Friday, August 25, at 4.35 P.M. Herr Karl Albrecht, former vice-commissioner of state forestry, would give a lecture entitled: ‘I accuse Moscow; the Comintern’s Plans for World Dictatorship.’

“‘Alas, at the scheduled hour Munich instead of a lecture broadcast a program of music — Russian music.”’

## STRATEGY OF TERROR

August 28

'Another day that was to have been decisive has gone by and the decision is postponed until tomorrow. Henderson did not arrive in Berlin until late in the evening and remained with Hitler over an hour, evidently adding some verbal explanations to the written note.

'Meantime the Quai is putting out to French correspondents a line of relative optimism which sounds slightly more concrete than the classic while-there-is-life-there-is-hope line. Peace may yet be saved, they say, provided France and England stand firm, may yet be saved even after the first shots have been fired in the east.

'Is it only a coincidence that censorship came into being this morning? Perhaps not, but judging from the severity with which they have clamped down on private wires, phones, etc., as well as on the press and radio, I conclude that it is a *bona-fide* military precaution as well, if only as a practice maneuver.

'Visited new press headquarters at Continental with our whole gang. Everything in wild confusion, officials scurrying around telling one another why it's impossible to put a telephone in this or that spot, typists from the Quai sitting around on bare mattresses in bedrooms making *risqué* comments on the situation, etc. Wave Root went over to get some information and they pressed him into service for a quarter of an hour answering phones from the Quai. We were told this was just a brotherly censorship to avert mutilation by the "guillotine" censorship at the cable companies. When I went back later in evening with copy, it looked pretty tough, however, with no evidence of the Quai and officers in uniform setting to work in a businesslike way with the blue pencils. They cut out the name of the Hotel Continental

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and a sentence which they thought suggested a distinction in treatment between French and foreign journalists.

'In typical French fashion the officers suspended operations for several minutes to enjoy a joke at the expense of the Tass correspondent, who was writing about the indignation in France against the Soviet treachery. Kiddled him about the Russian censorship and handed copy around for everyone to read.'

From my wife's diary:

August 28

'This strange crisis where nothing happens makes one day look much like the other. I feel as if for months we had now lived in this feverish confusion, where all normal life, all constructive life is suspended. The outstanding thing today is the appearance of "Anastasie" [French nickname for censorship]. We are now cut off from the world. No more long-distance phones, no more crossing of borders. We are rapidly sliding into that hateful state where all that matters in life is pushed into the background by organized hate, collective fear, and self-righteous lying. I can't see that it will be possible to continue being a correspondent and still keep one's self-respect in a war. What will there be to report? No diplomatic activity, no political activity, only news from the front (therefore lies), sob stuff, and atrocities. The first time I shall read about a children-with-hands-cut-off story I shall become anti-French.

'I fear there will have to be a lot of blowing on the hot coals to make hate flare up. The main reaction now is to pity the "*pauvre bougre d'allemand*" who must be trembling in his shoes, and who starts war with bread cards. That at least is what simple people say. "Germans are such credulous people" is the worst they can

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traditionally, the lead in jingoism, and it is somewhat nauseating to have to fight side by side with them and listen to the self-righteous imbecilities of those who are mainly responsible for the predicament we are in today.'

From my diary:

*August 29*

'In the evening a general outburst of optimism, mostly on the strength of Hitler's not having broken any china when he received the British reply. His reply received in London during the evening reported to leave the situation much where it was. According to an English friend the generals here don't want to let Hitler get out of the hole he has got himself into and they have the English in their pockets. Informed several ministers have high hopes in the Vatican; Bonnet counts more on the Kings of Italy and Belgium. Rumor that Laval is already in Rome, but can't be confirmed. Geoffrey Cox says Flandin full of arguments why there won't be war and on the strength of this Cox is betting ten to one on peace. Percy Philipp says he's betting seven to five the same way. Dan Reagan of the Embassy, whom I met with Percy at the Crillon Bar, also seemed to be on the peace side.

'I hear confidentially that an American agency sent a story from Berlin just about the time the British cabinet was meeting, saying Chamberlain had given in to all Hitler's demands. Embassy or State Department managed to get story killed.

'Nazi tracts in Dantzig announce "historic events" for tomorrow.'

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From my wife's diary:

August 29-30

'Two dull days, with the crisis in suspense. But the sun is shining and for the general public (Genia, Antoinette, and me included) the war seems once more remote and unreal, with the crisis having become a feature of everyday life, which does not automatically mean catastrophe. With "well-informed quarters" getting more and more glum, the ordinary Parisian has decided that "*ça s'arrangera*," on the assumption that it does not need all this negotiating to say "—." The idea that all this is a pre-arranged, semestrial scenario for the taxpayer and that only *les naïfs* and suckers will fall into the trap and get alarmed is flourishing again. At least in the daytime, because the night blackout dampens people's assurance a little. The "answering-Hitler's-answer-to-our-last-answer" game tickles the French sense of comedy. "Somebody hold me or I'll hit someone," is the way they see Hitler's game.

'On Tuesday evening even the professionals seemed to be more optimistic. We had a spaghetti dinner in the MacVanes' little studio and Geoffrey Cox was betting seven to one against war. It was a very gay dinner. We all agreed that another Munich would not be so simple as all that, as the French were fed up with mobilizing twice a year. Geoffrey predicted a sit-down-strike in the Maginot Line. The new censorship provided excellent grounds for abuse and anecdotes, the best item being Wave Root's case. He had in his story of how the Hotel Continental was functioning, mentioned the Quai d'Orsay secretaries sitting around on the mattresses waiting for their typewriters. The censors cut out the word "typewriters." They also censored the word "OK."

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From my diary:

*August 30*

'Yesterday's optimism generally replaced by pessimism this morning. Hitler's note asked for a quick reply and rumors are circulating of a twenty-four- or forty-eight-hour time-limit. Sat between Maynard Barnes and Bressy of the Quai d'Orsay at Press Club lunch for Giraudoux, who was not in a sparkling mood. Barnes predicted grimly we would get no sleep tonight, and said Bullitt, who had been relatively optimistic, was very gloomy this morning. Bressy mentioned the same rumors of an impending decision but didn't commit himself.

'Polish mobilization must be called general. Then there was a communiqué announcing railways requisitioned, followed later by announcements toning it down, which censor cut out of my story altogether. According to Falaize not much agitation or trepidation around Chamber.

'Censors getting very tough, and everyone fed up with whole business.

'Can't make out myself whether the French are really turning the heat on Hitler or whether they are covering up a sell-out. Latter seems rather improbable, though.'

*August 31*

'The turning-point in the crisis came tonight, but we don't know what really happened, nor can we say the little that we do know. The censors killed three messages of mine entirely, and later I learned from talking with the chief military censor that nothing could be said about the Italian offer which reached Paris and London today. He said they didn't want to call the public's attention to this phase of the situation at all, and all references

## IDEALS AS WEAPONS

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were suppressed in the French papers. As far as we can learn, Musso's proposal for some kind of conference parallel to a peace proposal of the Pope was taken seriously in some political quarters, even by Bonnet according to certain reports, but Daladier and the general staff sat on him and insisted on strict silence except for the communiqué that France would honor her alliances. Louis Lévy, a French journalist, smells Munich. Even the Embassy seemed uncertain. Later after a talk between Reynaud and Bullitt I learn Italo-German maneuver is all washed up. Falaize said Chamber sentiment not very alarmist; fact of Flandin's going out of town considered good sign.

'Yesterday, Chad tells me, censors cut word "Corridor" out of my copy: should read "Polish Pomerania." Much censoring of dispatches from London. Allowed to leak out, however, that England transmitted Hitler's "peace" offer to Poland.'

From my wife's diary:

*August 31 -*

'In the office I find a scene of confusion and despair. Ed tearing his hair, or rather looking like a thundercloud of concentrated fury, speaking sharply into the phone. The censorship stopped his whole story, no mention being allowed of the current negotiations. Paul Ward, English, an unknown young man, sit around drinking whiskey and listening to the radio. The radio, in a cracking German voice, is giving out a Hitler peace plan. I dare not, in view of the general irritation, ask what is going on. Finally English summarizes it for me. There is a German peace plan, the one coming over the radio. There is an Italian peace plan. This is strictly taboo. No one is to mention it. In spite of all this peace England is mobilizing her fleet. The French are calling



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up more classes. There is a cabinet meeting on in Paris. Some say war is assured. Others say no, this is the peak of the crisis, it will now lessen, and the danger of war is over. The atmosphere is catastrophic in the office, because the news is being censored at the source, and everyone feels that something is going on, something dramatic and history-making, and it is being kept from the public. I finally go home with the two girls. The streets are calm, and on a bench in the darkness lovers are kissing. Farther on a taxi is elegantly draped around a traffic post. A wonder there are not more accidents. Ed comes home at three o'clock and sits on my bed, eating sandwiches. He still does not know what is really going on.'

These pages have, I hope, given something of the feeling of the so-called diplomatic crises, really synthetic war scares fabricated by propaganda, which have become such a striking aspect of the life of nations in our day. In doing so they have also served to illustrate this modern phenomenon called war of nerves, in one of its most dramatic moments.

One important question arises: After all, the crisis of August, 1939, ended in war. Is it not, then, forcing history a little to write of it merely as a battle in the war of nerves? Isn't the real drama the diplomatic one, with war or peace for Europe hanging in the balance?

This question is fundamental. And the answer, as in the case of most fundamental questions, is: Yes, and no. To clarify this, let us try to imagine the same situation in a Europe which had never learned that propaganda could be used as a weapon or had never heard of the war of nerves. There would have been a diplomatic conflict all the same, for Germany meant to eliminate

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Poland as an obstacle in her eastward expansion, and the Allies felt they could not afford to let her do this and were prepared to fight if Germany insisted. Hence there would have been a crisis just the same, and inevitably a war scare.

Superficially, this hypothetical crisis might have resembled the real one. There would have been a period of uncertainty as the German and Allied Governments exchanged increasingly explicit warnings, trying to discover if the adversary was bluffing. The war fever in Germany and in the Allied countries would have followed a steadily ascending curve. Panic would have increased day by day in arithmetical progression.

Actually Europe's fever chart in the August crisis was a jagged one of ups and downs. As my diary shows, there was a sudden spurt of fever around August 5, followed by a drop; then a fluctuating but generally ascending curve of tension until around August 15, when there was a sudden outburst of optimism due to the peace rumors which were circulating. On August 18 the fever began going up again, fast, reaching the high point for the summer on August 24, after the publication of the terms of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact, which seemed to make war inevitable. Yet despite increasingly dramatic exterior symptoms of the crisis, there was a timid recrudescence of hope on August 25, and on August 29 I noted a 'general outburst of optimism' with intelligent, well-informed foreign observers offering odds against war. Even on August 31, the eve of the German attack on Poland, many shrewd observers did not believe war inevitable.

What is the explanation? To me it seems very simple. The Allies may never have been quite sure Hitler was not bluffing, but Hitler knew perfectly well they were not. He knew the French and British Governments were sincere when they said they would

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fight for Poland. But he thought he could break down their will or change their minds by his peculiar technique of psychological attack.

We have seen examples of different forms of the attack: defeatist and dissolvent propaganda, juridical arguments against the Polish position, the shock of the Russo-German peace pact, etc. The basis of Hitler's psychological strategy, however, lay, as I suggested earlier, in creating and timing a war scare: making the threat of war as vivid, spectacular, real, and unbearable to the people of France, England, and Poland as it could be made.

To make the war scare psychologically effective it was necessary both to sustain suspense over a long period and to punctuate this suspense, this permanent anxiety, with alarms and shocks, interspersed with lights of hope. Hitler's own war experience, or his intuitions, or his psychological advisers, had taught him that these were the psychological conditions which unnerve a man in the face of danger, break down his will to affront it. Propaganda, showmanship, and diplomacy built up the suspense, created the alarms, and delivered the shocks.

Sometimes a speech, a statement to foreign correspondents, or an article in the German press got the point across. Often it was a calculated indiscretion revealing German diplomatic or military plans to the enemy Intelligence Services. In all times this has been a favorite maneuver of diplomats and strategists, but Germans under Hitler have shown themselves the masters in this technique, and have frequently employed it with propagandist rather than military aims. When surprise was really needed, as in the occupation of the Rhineland, of Austria and Czechoslovakia and Poland, the German plans in all their harrowing details were known in Paris and London weeks in advance.

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**All this** explains why this midsummer drama which you have been following was not simply a diplomatic crisis, but a psychological offensive based upon a diplomatic crisis. The offensive failed in its primary object of paralyzing France and England in face of the German attack on Poland, and there was war or something called war.

**But it** was not wholly ineffective, and after you have read the next chapter, describing the state of mind in which the French people went to war, you may agree with me that it came very near succeeding.

# VII

## HAMLETS IN UNIFORM

DESPAIRING of peace, partially anesthetized by the war of nerves, the people of Europe went to war not so much as sheep go to the slaughterhouse, but as men commit suicide in a dream. Their souls fell apart, and the part which marched off assenting was estranged from the part which refused, so that everything seemed unreal and like a dream. For two days, the twilight period between the first German attack on Poland and the expiration of the French ultimatum, evidence of war struggled with unbelief, and the expectation of a miracle which seemed to underlie the ceremonial hesitations of the Allied Governments was the rational mind's rejection of a nightmare.

My wife and I were too caught up in the collective whirlpool to have reacted very differently from the other members of our *milieu*. Here is what she wrote on September 1:

'So this is it! War can break out on such a day as this! A sunny day with voices of children floating up from the park, sounding through my morning drowsiness. At nine o'clock the phone finally wakes me up completely; Molly tells me Dantzig

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has been annexed to the Reich. Madame Long gave her the news. I am very sleepy and answer curtly "Zut!" Back in bed I ponder on this, then wake Ed up. He decides to go on sleeping a little, not being interested in a war which is too late to make the morning papers. My sleepiness wears off, giving way to that painful throat-parching feeling of excitement. I feel that hard knot forming in the pit of my stomach which will enable me to grow a crust of insensibility. From now on I will not think of life or death any more, nor of the future, nor whether our youth is wasted nor whether we will survive it . . .

'We have a peace-time breakfast, the last one; lunch will already be a war lunch. . . .Ed, summoned by the Embassy, rushes off to town, and it is still a peace morning. Then Molly rings up again. Paris *Midi* has the story of the Polish invasion, of Polish towns bombarded. Now we are at war. Antoinette, on seeing me put down the phone, knows it and takes the news without winking. . . .The phone rings every half-hour. Everyone is giving us the news. The voices are queer but calm.

'With Marguerite's help I prepare lunch. She knows now that it is war, for the last two days she has not mentioned her son. . . . She only breaks down a little when Antoinette departs after lunch with our silver and Flint (our Scotty) for the Touraine. A sudden rage to get rid of possessions has gripped me, and it is with a sort of relief that I see the little beast off. Ed goes in town, leaving instructions in case of an air raid. . . .The road to Versailles is one long snake of cars leaving town, crammed with children and luggage. There is no more talk of war in the shops now, only some faint grousing about having to live in the darkness and some jokes. People know they must not waste their emotions. . . .

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'In the evening from the windows I see balloons rising in the clear sky, big and shapeless behind the trees. Genia and I have dinner in the garden of the little pension where Ed and I used to play tennis. We have a long conversation over *fine* and coffee with two boys, students who are to be mobilized in four days — "*Quatre jours, c'est bon à prendre.*" We talk about the war. They are intelligent, without any illusions, but they drink to victory jokingly. When I refuse to join them under the pretext that I will wait for victory to come first, they agree that it does not do to display any enthusiasm for the beginning of a war. . . . Horrible war jitters in the night and no sleep until five in the morning.'

This is how war came to one sensitive woman, and the elliptical reaction, characteristic of shock, is what you would expect. The shock, however, is not so great as to annul the reality of war. For my wife the realization of war, however numbed by shock, was instantaneous, and so was it with everyone in Europe who heard the news. Being a woman, a passive victim of the war, she could accept the reality. Stranger and more pathetic was the reaction of men who had to go to war, or send others to it. Here is what I wrote in my diary on the same day (September 1):

'The war we have been fearing so long without ever really believing in it started at dawn this morning on the Polish frontier, but it is only by a kind of algebra that we can accept the reality of it at all. Some people frankly do not accept it, despite the general mobilization proclaimed at noon, despite the ineluctable evidence of the dispatches and the communiqués. Many ordinary Frenchmen still believe that it will all blow over somehow after a day or two of fighting in Poland. Even the Quai d'Orsay seems anxious to encourage this feeling, though they don't quite venture

## HAMLETS IN UNIFORM

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to express it themselves, for they call attention to the fact that it is impossible to state yet whether the Germans are pursuing local objectives or are really trying to smash Poland. The *Temps* likewise echoes this doubt. Presumably if the Germans were merely seeking a *fait accompli* in the way of occupying the Corridor there still might be some hope of saving peace. Amazing! This is one more sign among many others that appeasement sentiment is still strong and that the general staff won only a close last-minute victory over the peace party in the cabinet. Apparently the German calculations were not so far off, but they were far enough off to make all the difference between a bloodless victory over Poland and a European war to the bitter end.'

This may appear to be a purely subjective impression, but the following excerpt from an article summarizing the reactions of the French press, published in the *Paris Midi*, not on September 1 but at noon on September 2, proves how strong the feeling of unreality was:

'They are fighting in Poland. Will there be fighting tomorrow, along the Rhine? One of our contemporaries, *Le Matin*, announces that Parliament this afternoon will close no door [on peace]. This is because, thanks to Italy, negotiations are still going on. It is possible that Hitler, after having taken position, will agree to talk. Perhaps the scenario for such a truce has already been arranged with Mussolini. A very feeble hope, of course, which the papers mention without stressing it.'

It was not just a feeble hope but an absurdity. From the nature of the German attack and their military dispositions, it was obvious from the first minute that Hitler was not trying to recover Dantzig and the Corridor by force, but to annihilate the Polish army. Everyone in every newspaper room in Paris



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knew it, but there were many who would not admit it, because they would not admit war. This was so in England as well as in France, and it was so in Germany. All observers who were in Germany at the outbreak of war agree that the German people, whatever their misgivings, did not look upon the Polish expedition as a war; that they were stunned like the French people when war in the west became a reality; that like the French, more even than the French, they could not admit this reality and kept on believing, despite the French and British mobilizations, despite the ultimatums, that the Allies would not fight. (A few weeks later, on my first visit to the Western Front, I learned that as late as September 6 the French took prisoners on German soil who did not yet know they were at war with France, could not understand what French troops were doing in German territory, and indignantly demanded to be released.)

Of course there was a deliberate propagandist purpose back of these efforts to 'annul' the reality of war. In the west the last partisans of appeasement, unable to make frankly defeatist propaganda, were trying to smother the war, and in Germany the Government itself was annulling the war in the west to keep morale from cracking. That does not render the popular reaction to this annulment propaganda less interesting, for if it was effective in a certain measure it was because simple men wanted to annul the war, did so unconsciously. The propagandists merely put in their hands the drug-bottle for which they were groping.

From this widespread refusal to accept an irrefutable war I draw the conclusion that the horror of war among the peoples of Europe was far deeper than any of their rulers had realized; men held peace to their hearts long after it was no more, like a female ape cradling her dead baby in her arms, until only a few

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strips of skin are left. While the false peace lived they hated it because it was false, and so cruel; when they had strangled it they realized like Othello how much they had loved it, and they went on loving, yet felt they could not have done otherwise. That is why their souls fell apart, and this state is beyond the threshold of the pathological, where Othello becomes Hamlet.

Perhaps this is only rhetoric, but the same idea is expressed in the notes I made in my diary at the beginning of the war, and though this too may have been rhetoric, it was rhetoric close to life, for the fever of the moment did not give me time to orchestrate my impressions. Here is the rest of the entry for September 1:

'First heard the news of the German attack when called to the Embassy for a conference with Bullitt at 11.30. Found Bullitt cheerful and full of fight, riding the storm. Categorical about general war starting. He had been talking to Biddle in Warsaw around ten and said he had heard the bombs exploding. After the press conference had a tomato juice with John Elliot (correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune*) on the terrace of Weber's; streets gay and sunny, and people if they had heard the news didn't yet realize the importance of it.

'The general mobilization decree got home, however, and people went around in the afternoon with sick gray faces like a boxer who has been fouled. They know it is true, but they can't feel it. The idea of going to war in cold blood out of intellectual conviction against an enemy they don't hate seems so monstrous that it really staggers the imagination. Hitler would make everything easy for us if he would only start to bomb, but without that there seems to be no way of whipping up war spirit. Not that anyone argues against the official theses. On the con-

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trary, there seems to be complete unanimity, unanimity in conscious acceptance of a necessary war, unanimity in unconscious rejection of an absurd and monstrous war.

'Have long felt that horror of war was the central political attitude of our time, but I realize now that I underestimated the depth of this feeling. Talking to stiff Britishers like X—— and Y——, who knew the last war, gives the thing away. They carry on in the usual British way, but they don't make any pretense of putting up a front. X—— says he is going to bring up his remaining twelve bottles of champagne from his cellar and sit on his sun terrace and drink them, one after the other, as long as the bottles last or he does. Both of them talk as the survivors of the Somme must have talked when they were finally taken out of the trenches.

'If the feeling in Germany is the same, and according to all reports it is even stronger, I don't see how either side can last more than a few weeks, and it is just a question of which cracks first. Maybe all this will change in the next few days.'

In a rough way I think I caught in these notes the essential difference between the mobilization and outbreak of war in 1914 and in 1939. In 1914 in France there was enthusiasm, panic, despair. Some men went off to war singing, with flowers stuck in the muzzles of their rifles, others threw down their rifles and deserted *en masse*. This time there were few patriots, few deserters. Except for the Communists, very few Frenchmen thought that the Government was wrong to declare war. Yet the vast majority answered the call to arms like somnambulists. In 1914, peace had been so long that the horrors of war were unreal, and it had been so good that it appeared a lost treasure to those who had not found their treasure in war. The conscripts of 1939 left

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behind them a peace which had become a nightmare to enter a war still vividly remembered as a nightmare from the last one. Which was the worse nightmare was not so much a conflict between men of opposing opinions as a conflict of opposing instincts in men. It was not a mass neurosis in the loose sense, but a neurosis of the masses. Individuals reacted to the war in a neurotic way, sometimes hysterically, more often stunned and apathetic, always with some awkwardness in their speech or their gestures betraying the inner contradiction. Groping through the darkened streets of Paris at night you stumbled constantly over drunks sprawled on the sidewalks and even in the streets. Unconsciousness was the only escape, but a purely individual one. This was the first time in history that civilized nations had gone to battle unsustained by spiritual intoxicants, the first cold war.

From my wife's diary, once more:

September 2

'A bad day. War has come to every French home. Despair is on every face. Those *affichés* again, and with them twenty-five years of happiness are crossed out and the clock is once again at August 1, 1914. With the difference that now all, even those who were not born then, know what awaits them. The man who is off knows what awaits him; he has been through it before, or his father has. He also knows what awaits his wife in Paris. Hope has gone. And the war spirit has not yet flourished. We all feel like the condemned man who is taken out of his prison cell at dawn.

'General mobilization. Paris has an ugly look, and it is a gray day with heavy clouds. The streets except in the center are empty, with scraps of paper blowing around and wrecked taxis.

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In the *bistrots* there is much loud talking by vicious red-faced men, while the women stand around looking sullen. Coming back from the Gare de Lyon, where I saw Richard off for Switzerland, and passing by the Bastille, I saw many groups on the sidewalk, where the cursing seemed to be uninhibited. . . . In the evening we have dinner with Wave Root and Paul Ward at an Alsatian restaurant on the Place Saint-Michel. . . . At the restaurant people stare at us with fish eyes because we talk a foreign language and laugh sometimes. . . . At a neighboring table some soldiers and girls are celebrating noisily in defiance of the prevailing rottenness. A drunk comes up a little later and sticks a bleary head through the laurel bushes and cries "Bravo!" to the soldiers. There is an uncomfortable silence.'

September 3

'At eleven o'clock this morning the World War resumed its course after an armistice of twenty-five years. Tonight France and England are at war with Germany. Driving out to Marly in the evening Genia and I buy an *Intransigeant*, half the page blackened with the words *La Guerre*. It is satisfying to see that the *Intran* looks exactly as we always thought it would look on the day war broke out. Only we never really believed it would break out, and now it is here our minds still cannot grasp it. We had dinner at a modest country inn, where we found the *patron* roaming about with a hammer nailing planks over the windows, muttering war memories and threats to whoever happened to be near him. There were several couples in the room in casual holiday clothes — what the French consider casual. They looked nice, the kind of people you would seek to get acquainted with in a small hotel. When the radio started giving out Daladier's

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proclamation we all edged up to it and listened in silence. When it was over one man said "*Ça y est*" (There it is), and held out his hand to his neighbor with a sick smile. We went back to the tables and for a minute no one talked. Then the grumbling started, along the lines: "It's impossible, monstrous, shattering. We are going to see all the hateful lies again; why do men go on? Instead of losing their personality by donning a degrading uniform and by imbibing enough wine to lull their screaming inner revolt, why don't they refuse to go?" — "Fear of the gendarme, nothing else," said a tall, good-looking sunburnt man. Then they cursed those who were responsible for this mess, those who sabotaged the League of Nations, "the most beautiful thing ever conceived."

'The *Marseillaise* suddenly blared forth and a young woman jumped up and silenced the radio. "I can't listen to that," she said. These, textually, were the things I heard shouted in the dimly lit little dining-room, and the men who talked like that were all war veterans. Two were due to leave again tomorrow.

'*Le Maréchal*, the old *patron*, had also been in the war. He had very definite ideas about the Germans. "They're sheep," he said, "and they'll let themselves be led to war as long as we leave one of them alive."

September 4

'Much dashing around, after hearing of the sinking of the *Athenia*. First surge of hate. The old-timers all say, "The same thing all over again." ... François is to leave tonight. He is silent, and I suddenly feel I have always underrated him. He is one of the few people who have stayed civilized in this avalanche. Later I come upon Apostolis sitting disconsolately in a smelly

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little restaurant across from the censor's office. He is shattered and I feel incredibly sorry for him. He seems relieved to find that Ed and I have not let him down about this and feel as he does.'

This is how the people of France went to war in our time. From what I heard, the spirit in England was much the same, slightly less catastrophic, perhaps, because England did not have total conscription. In Germany morale was lower, if possible, though despair may not have been quite so acute, as the feeling of unreality lasted longer and was officially encouraged. Only in Poland men reacted to war traditionally, perhaps because the Polish idea of war was traditional, and even farther from reality than the western idea. Until the outbreak, the myth of irresistible cavalry charges sweeping over East Prussia and even to the gates of Berlin — cities still had gates in the Polish dream — provided a sufficient intoxicant for morale. After that the Polish people were kept busy trying to exercise the national talent for dying gloriously under conditions which, technically, made it difficult.

In France and elsewhere, I suppose, there were exceptions, determined men who would not let themselves think of the horrors and marched off to their barracks or their desks with a whole mind. Some were individual idealists; others simply adopted institutional attitudes become dominant for the individual, like professional officers or the scions of France's three great aristocratic orders, the noble, the Jacobin, and the revolutionary. It was the traditions of these three orders which made war possible at all, and the chances of victory, which I believe are good, lie with them. For the nobles, those with the heredi-

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tary *de*, the demountable names, it was very simple. Several centuries of muddled thinking on the problems of privilege and obligation had evolved the rationalization that fighting for the fatherland was the social justification of their class. Just as in the eighteenth century it was considered vulgar for a gentleman to keep track of his debts, so in the twentieth it was considered vulgar to inquire too closely into what he was fighting for, an attitude which had frequently got the nobles into trouble but stood them in good stead now. They fought for the particle *de*, which was enough.

Several months after the beginning of war a night-reconnaissance pilot, son of a French officer famous for courage as well as generalship, explained the psychology of his class to me:

'I am not a brave man, but I have a brave name,' he said. 'Every time I go up I am scared to death, but I have to go because my name is *de* ——. If it were Dupont I would not fight. All the officers in my regiment have names which unscrew in the middle, and that is why they are all brave.'

He admitted that the Duponts in the army were brave, too, but seemed to think it was because the du Ponts *de* —— set them such a high example.

The Duponts I knew in the army likewise seemed to think their courage came from something outside of them, and did not think they would have been brave if their name had been du Pont *de* —— and they had cousins in the German army. Their courage came not from their names but from their family ideal, *la patrie*, which they cherished because their ancestors had enjoyed so much taking it away from the nobles. They were scions of the Jacobin tradition, the most important in France because it functions like a ductless gland determining France's relation to



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Europe; insufficient secretion could lead to coma and Munich, overactivity to a hypertrophy of France swelling to Queretaro or the Beresina.

The revolutionary aristocracy likewise had a traditional courage, just as they had a biological nucleus for their class, reflected in the typical consonances of their names, just as they continued to inhabit the traditional revolutionary quarters between the Bastille and the Place de la Nation in Paris after the bourgeoisie moved in, as the nobles remained in the Faubourg Saint-Germain after the ministries and the tradesmen moved in. Their courage had been developed during a century and a half by trying to kill the bourgeoisie and being killed by them, but in this war they could not be wholly of one mind as the others were, for there had been treason in the family, the Russian branch, and this was the gravest psychological hazard France had to face in the war.

Up to now we have been considering the European reaction to war as an affective, human problem. Let us think of it for a moment as a military problem. It was as clear to the French and German high commands as to everyone else that their troops and their peoples did not want to fight. Their docility in obeying the mobilization orders, in putting themselves in uniform, their good-will in carrying out their first military duties, their assent to the official reasons for going to war, so full of good-will, like children repeating a lesson they have memorized but not understood — all this did not deceive the military leaders. They knew that it is not with such men you storm the Argonne, or even hold Verdun. Because they were professional soldiers and their machine was turning now, it did not occur to them to advise their Governments to cancel the war. If it had occurred to them

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they would not have done so, because they, better than any, realized that if the peoples of Europe demobilized now it would be a much harder thing to remobilize them; that the Government which attempted to cancel the war would only lose it; and that any hesitation, even, compromised the precarious morale which made mobilization and concentration possible. They perceived that the very depth of the feeling against war made war necessary, if nations were to survive. And morale, they found, was good enough for going through the motions, would improve instantaneously if the enemy aroused the latent instinct of self-preservation by attacking.

It was not good enough, they knew, to throw great armies against a fortified enemy. In every army in Europe the lessons of the World War were vividly remembered, nowhere more than in the French army. In 1914 a generation of statesmen and officers so civilized that they took even civilization lightly launched their peoples into the most atrocious war of history, bled their countries to death, because the rules called for it. In 1939 their barbarous successors, living in the ruins of what had been Europe, went to war with a prudence and restraint hardly witnessed in medieval tournaments. Generals worried more about the comfort and safety of their troops than pacifists ever had, even extending their solicitude to the enemy, because of reprisals, which were justly and scientifically dosed. The most ruthless aggressors, the most barbarous heirs of pre-war Europe, seemed the most determined to fight a bloodless war and were the most punctilious in their dealings with the enemy, unless the enemy were Poland or a civilian. Liberated from all the rules of civilized intercourse, commanding vast and unimagined engines of destruction, the rival armies in western

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Europe showed a restraint which men in time of peace had never attained. And this without pacts, without diplomats, or tribunals, without any direct means of communication, expressing themselves only by fire or silence, which prevented reprisals from provoking counter-reprisals and progressively multiplying.

This was not because the professional soldiers loved humanity or hated violence, but because they feared that unrestricted violence would bring back the kind of war which was a nightmare to their troops, with consequences which would be a nightmare to the staffs. Air raids were the nightmares of civilians. Being in a box-barrage, or caught in an artillery preparation, as for Verdun, or lying hung and screaming on the wire in no-man's-land, was the nightmare of the soldier. The mutinies in 1917, Bolshevism in Russia, the revolution in Germany, were the nightmares of the staff officers. More than ever after the Russo-German non-aggression pact, the fear of proletarian revolt, of the downfall of régimes and societies, after a military defeat, or simply a costly victory, inhibited the martial ardor of the professionals.

If they could not have a war without nightmares, at least they must give their soldiers and peoples a war which would begin gradually and painlessly, steeling them for the nightmares. Rightly they grasped that the horror of the masses for war, like their own for certain forms of war, was not, properly speaking, humanitarian, but simply human, being based on fear. They must be given a war which did not seem fearful, as it was in their imaginations, and no doubt in all armies the professionals were pleased to have such a revenge on the pacifists, who had called them butchers, and put their *amour-propre* into making it a model war, even if a castrate one to the traditionalists.

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To my mind this question of morale has played a big part in shaping the form and course of the war which is now being fought in Europe, and will probably be a decisive factor in determining the outcome. All sorts of other factors, tactical, strategical, political, economic, and demographic, have contributed as well — but I do not think the psychological factor was the least of them — and by a strange coincidence their influence was concurrent rather than contradictory.

France, with a stationary birth rate and a population of forty millions, could not risk the losses necessary to break through the Siegfried position. Germany, with her eighty millions and her rising birth rate, might have survived the blood-letting from an offensive against the Maginot position, but did not have sufficient reserves of raw materials and munitions to support a prolonged battle of material in case the thrust were not immediately decisive, which conservative tacticians doubted it would be. A flanking maneuver through the neutral countries involved the same risks. Germany might have utilized her considerable superiority in aviation at the outset of war to carry out highly destructive attacks on France and England, but feared reprisals, chiefly because of the possible effect on morale in the Reich. The physical destruction, the purely military effectiveness, of aerial warfare would be greater in the Allied countries than in Germany, but the Allied bombs contained a higher moral charge of explosive than the German ones.

For Allied bombs would not just blow German homes and German women and children to bits, to say nothing of economic and military objectives, but a German legend as well, the legend that the Führer was a magician who could win lands without wars, thanks to his magical will, or if there should be wars, will

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them into harmlessness, throw up a magical wall between the German people and their horrors. The Siegfried Line and the strength of German aviation, seconded by wonderful ground defense, the 'Siegfried Line of the air,' were part of this magical wall, built by propaganda and the deep tones in Hitler's voice. Perhaps the French, through excessive caution, missed their one chance of a quick victory by not attacking this magical wall. Perhaps the Germans were right in thinking magic even more important than material. In any case the French General Staff, otherwise so foresighted, had not accumulated any supplies of magical bucklers which could convert mobilized civilians overnight into seasoned shock troops, and the problem of wartime morale was essentially the same in the two countries.

In Germany five years of intensive racial and militarist propaganda and the resurrection of tribal myths had achieved this result: the conscience or the sensibility of the German people had been blunted to the extent that it would sanction and even participate in colonial expeditions against inoffensive neighbors, glory in safe triumphs like machine-gunning Polish civilians from an airplane — or even dangerous ones like running a tank behind the Polish lines — but the instinct of life in the German people had not been quenched to the extent that they would march with locked arms singing into battle, against an army like the French, as Edgar Mowrer had seen them across the Yser. In simpler words, their rulers had raised them from a sheep mentality to a hyena mentality, but not yet to lion mentality, which is no slur on the courage of the German people, admittedly equal to any. The same phenomenon was observable in Italy at the approach of war; veterans of Abyssinia, Spain, Albania, and the castor-oil squads in a moment of sincere illumination foresaw all

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the values of civilization about to be swept away by a tidal wave of blood, and found their mission in raising a dike. This, again, is no insult to the valor of the Italian people, merely a tribute to the awesome god of modern war.

The French and British peoples had arrived at the same psychological *impasse* by a parallel path. Having no vital space to conquer, loaded, on the contrary, with the unwieldy loot gathered in the last war, they had not been taught that dying in bed was treason to posterity. Their ideal of an orderly world, however, a world good for the rich to live in, called for a certain courage in police duties, an effective solidarity called collective security, the fattest burgher jumping from his bed at midnight with a shotgun to succor a neighbor besieged by burglars. For collective security, peace, democracy, civilization, and other bourgeois ideals the French and British citizen had been taught that it was sweet and decorous to die, and that he should always be prepared to do so. In practice, when burglars came in the night to the neighbor, he reacted exactly as the Italian who had been told to live as a lion reacted when there were lions about; instead of rushing with his shotgun he found it more convenient to toss the burglars a coin, provided they stayed on the other side of the street. He retained enough enthusiasm for his ideals of order to cheer at a hanging, but not enough to form a posse . . . until 1939; and the measure of his past cowardice was the measure of his heroism then; but too much energy had been expended in the victory over himself to make him immediately effective against the enemy.

- This, then, was the military problem of morale: to wage war with armies composed of these Hamlets in uniform, in whose tragedy we all participate. The war that was waged, at its

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beginning at least, was the only kind possible under the circumstances, the more so since even the generals were afflicted in some degree with the Hamlet complex, loving the thing their hatred forced them to destroy, and hoping they would find a modern *ersatz* for war, or simply conduct negotiations under arms.

Failing that, it had to be a reticent and calculated war, like those of the seventeenth century, which in fact it came to resemble. The main principle was: no frontal attack where approximately equal forces were engaged (fortifications and automatic fire were considered as doubling or tripling the defender's effectives). Pressure and maneuver were intended to lure or force the enemy into frontal attack, so that he and not you would learn what offensives cost in modern war. Since the battlefield was Europe, maneuver would be conducted by diplomats rather than generals; instead of transporting an army you bought or bulldozed yourself one from a small country, or tried to maneuver the enemy into attacking it so that you could defend. Apart from being allies and battlefields, small countries would be used as in seventeenth-century wars to live on and to sharpen your armies' claws, giving your raw troops a facile prey as Wallenstein did in order to make for them a victorious soldier's morale.

The central theater in such a war had to be the most quiet; the opposing forces would sit down at a respectful distance and eye one another for months on end. The military duties of a really aggressive and dangerous character required by tradition would be reduced to a minimum and left largely to professionals and volunteer sadists or suicides, specialists in death.

The active arms would be the submarines and the air forces, not contained by a two-dimensional field, and above all the invisible arms, deployed in the fourth dimension of total war:

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economic, political, and psychological arms. These arms not only escaped the spatial limitations of the battlefield, but the normal servitudes of belligerency as well; they could be used behind the enemy lines and against him in neutral countries. Here, in this sector, with these invisible arms, the real war would be fought. This is what an acute observer at the bedside of a dying peace would have foreseen in the first days of September, 1939. If he based his vision solely on the problem of morale, he would have predicted this kind of war in the first months, for the basic factor would probably change as civilian attitudes slowly gave way to military ones in the combatant countries. If he based it on other factors as well, he might foresee a war of this kind lasting until the peace. This remains to be established, for the war is still young, but the form it took in the first months was exactly that determined by the limitations of morale, and no war ever had a stranger aspect.

The problem of morale also established the primacy of the psychological arm, warfare by propaganda, notably. Two other factors confirmed this primacy: the difficulty of getting at the enemy any other way, and the whole tendency of our times. Of the three invisible weapons, all closely related, the psychological was the most used, and it has the further interest that at the same time that it was determined by the conditions of the war, it helped to determine the aspect of the battlefield, making it still more strange. German thoroughness in making fraternization and defeatist propaganda, particularly, made the front look at times more like a picnic ground for a lunatic asylum than a battlefield.



# VIII

## WAR IN OUR TIME

NO ABSTRACT analysis of the form and conditions of the war can bring out the strangeness of it so strikingly as a simple description of some of the things which I myself, through eyes of journalistic innocence, witnessed in Paris and during my several trips to the front as a correspondent in the first three months of the war. In Paris until late in September we had no idea how the war was being fought, since no correspondents had been allowed at the front, and no soldiers were returning. Thinking traditionally, as men always think, we translated the conventional language of the communiqués in terms of World War experience.

The result was that for several weeks the American public, as well as the French and British publics, followed with bated breath the fluctuations of a war which was wholly imaginary. It was not so much the sensational false rumors, the capture of Saarbrücken, the piercing of the Siegfried Line, which the more enthusiastic agency correspondents cabled, that distorted the picture of the war for American readers, but rather the tone which even the most conservative of us used in our dispatches,

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the connotations and assumptions lurking behind our adjectives, which naturally emerged from hiding in the headlines the copy-readers put on our stories. It was not the first time in my journalistic experience that the real world and the world as reflected in the newspapers had appeared to follow tangent courses. The romance of the Duke of Windsor and Mrs. Simpson, notably, had, it seemed to me, been suffused with that light unseen on land or sea, but never had the divorce between journalism and reality been so great as over this war.

I did not realize it at the moment; like every other American correspondent in Paris I was writing schizophrenic copy about the war. Only two things struck us as slightly unnatural: there was no bombing from the air, and this war, unlike all wars legitimately born, had not produced a song, no 'Madelon,' 'Tipperary,' or 'Over There.' It was a war without vocal cords, and even the atrocity glands functioned deficiently. Only in Poland, far off and unreal in the mist of battle, did the flowers of horror sprout in their traditional beds. German pilots, it was somewhat timidly reported in the French press, had dropped poisoned chocolates in the streets of Polish villages, the same chocolates, symbolic of some dark complex in our collective unconscious, which have appeared at the beginning of every modern war, including the civil war in Spain.

The German pilots were also reported to have launched balloons filled with mustard gas, at great peril to their own eyes and lives. One day in September a mustard-gas balloon floated all the way to Paris and came down as a sinister little strip of silk on the window-sill of an alert householder, who telephoned the papers; but a still more alert censor remembered that the French meteorological services also used silk balloons, filled with a

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smelly gas, to test wind currents. Another time after an air-raid alarm eleven men and women, some of them sturdy, smelled the fumes from a fragment of anti-aircraft shell which had fallen near them and knew that it was gas and that they were doomed, and fell unconscious. Unlike Lévy-Bruhl's savages, they did not die magically, for the fire department was able to revive them.

By the middle of September a new kind of horror tale began to be whispered in Paris: that men who had been sent away to die were still living, on the whole not too uncomfortably, and on correct if not amicable terms with the enemy. One enterprising young American correspondent, Walter Kerr of the *New York Herald Tribune*, made a motor trip beyond Metz toward the German border, and came back with the news that he had seen children playing in the streets of villages immediately behind the Maginot Line.

Four American correspondents friendly to France but friendlier still to truth, Edgar Mowrer of the *Chicago Daily News*, Paul Ward of the *Baltimore Sun*, Kenneth Downs of the *INS*, and myself, decided that we must follow Kerr's example, but do still better, actually reach this strange front and see for ourselves what kind of war it was. Accordingly, on September 20, braving the rigors of French military law, traveling abusively on a pass intended to cover only the civilian areas, we set out from Paris in Edgar's car, before dawn. Partly by luck and partly by sound strategy, we eluded all the obstacles in our path, pierced the Maginot Line in the rear, and early in the afternoon victoriously reached Sarreguemines, on the Franco-German border, where we surrendered to the authorities, having seen enough.

The real front was three or four miles farther into Germany. From the window of the officers' mess in a villa on the hillside,

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where a friendly captain led us for lunch, pending determination of our fate, we looked out across the Saar Valley at the front as passengers on a ship look at the equator. What we saw was a green and pleasant land, rising to gently curving, wooded heights, dotted here and there with toylike Teutonic villages: Hitlerdorf, held by the French; Bubingen, in the Saar, still German. Somewhere between in the landscape was the front. Nothing marked it. In fact later on, after another trip, I wrote, 'You know when you are at the front when the landscape, which has been military, becomes simply pastoral and empty.'

There were no shell-holes, no bomb craters, no blasted tree-trunks, no ruined houses or broken windows. After the sordid battlefields of Spain, which had given me the same idea of war that a brutal sexual initiation gives to a young girl of love, this seemed miraculous and a comfort. It did not seem terrible to me that men should be dying in these green fields; moreover, I knew that not many were dying or the fields would not be so green. (A few days later a semi-official agency declared that the French army had suffered more casualties in automobile accidents than at the front.) In Spain, after seeing the battlefields that they lead to, I have come to be terribly suspicious of any political ideals, especially the more noble ones. Here in Sarreguemines, in this fair autumn sun, filled with afternoon wine and honest army food, including plundered German sweetcakes, having carried a good adventure to unforeseen success and sharing it with good comrades, I felt almost lyrical about the war.

We all felt lyrical about the officers of the French army, because of the two who were with us, plying us with afternoon wine and fighting off a dog-faced captain of gendarmes, who, with dungeons, if not firing-squads, in his eye, hovered about and

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cawed for the bodies. Such fine men in their uniforms, we thought, uniforms with the prestige of negligence hiding a nakedness more desirable to men than that of women, the masculine generosity of courage, whereby warriors became noble, like women, all their faculties functioning nobly. These warriors were like women, too, in their patience and understanding, their sympathy with those human weaknesses which they had put behind them. They led their soldiers gently and patiently like children being led to enjoy an unpleasant duty, in this case dying.

The lurking pacifist in me smelled out the sirens in uniform, more tempting and more dangerous to male flesh than any other, and I thought what fools the pacifists are, blinding themselves to the dangerous beauty of war, croaking only about the ugliness of it, trying to disgust men, like parents trying to keep their children chaste by telling them sex is nasty, and with about as much success.

These personal reflections have a relevance to the battlefield I have been describing. It was not even necessary to talk with the soldiers, but simply to look at their faces, remembering how their faces had been in front of the mobilization posters, to see that their minds had evolved along parallel lines. Not being filled, as we were, with afternoon wine and free adventure, they were probably not lyrical about the war, but seemingly reconciled to it, at least as long as it stayed within these bounds, and certainly under the spell of their officers, who understood them.

In Sarreguemines, while we were awaiting the examination of our papers in the hallway of the local high school, which was then the headquarters of a French division, the war came to us in greeting. Whistles blew and a droning sound began and guns started going off. There was a stampede, of bodies as soldiers

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rushed, not to get under cover but out in the courtyard to see. Out of sight to us — but the soldiers' eyes saw them — two German planes were passing almost directly overhead and the anti-aircraft batteries were sowing mushroom beds of white and black puffs in the warm sky.

The little soldiers wanted to crane and point, excited, but the officers reminded them about cover and they rearranged themselves obediently in the shade of things.

'You see they are getting to be quite prudent,' said an officer in kind approval.

I thought what a strange war where imprudence is discouraged, but remembered that it is in courting, too, and this war was at the stage of courtship.

Because of this there had been no imprudence on either side, at least on land. The French had just completed an operation which all military experts thought had disappeared from modern war: an untroubled mobilization. As it was around Sarreguemines, so it was everywhere within the frontiers of France; there were no broken houses, no broken bridges, no cut railway lines, no pockmarks of war, because no enemy shell or bomb or even bullet had fallen on French soil.

The French, being less thorough than the Germans in everything, even in restraint, had tested some artillery on German objectives, carefully avoiding the toylike villages, but they had even more carefully refrained from any act which might arouse the enemy out of his unhoped-for slumber. Their own mobilization was too important to them. A staff officer in charge of this vital phase of the war told me later that his particular nightmare, which was shared by the whole high command and by the civilian statesmen in every country, was the destruction of the army by

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*Blitzkrieg* before mobilization was complete. The question of mobilization was as important in the life of modern nations as getting your six-shooter out in time was in the Old' West; it determined policy as the quick draw determined the dress and social comportment of the cowboy. Caught while loading their revolver in an argument with a notorious bad man, the French wisely refrained from making their points too forcibly, and went on loading and hoping. Pessimists did not think this possible. The French General Staff, taking a middle-of-the-road view as always, thought there was a reasonable chance of getting half the army in battle posts on the frontier in time to meet the *Blitzkrieg*, and at the same time evacuate Paris and the other big centers without losing more than a couple of hundred thousand civilians. In the first days of mobilization, at the end of a hard day, the officers in charge of mobilization thought about it this way as they dropped asleep: well, that is  $x$ -hundred trains which got through, in any case.

At the same time that they were mobilizing and concentrating their army, the French, using largely colonial troops and regiments of the regular army, made a cautious advance into the Saar, this being one way of covering their mobilization. We had been writing about this advance in Paris, not understanding it, not realizing the problems of mobilization or how well the generals on both sides understood the feelings of the soldiers about war. Actually what had happened was this:

As the French moved across the frontier with the feeling elements well ahead and little pressure from the mass, the Germans simply withdrew, leaving placards of greeting set up in front of their positions, and mines in the ground all around. The placards carried messages like: 'French soldiers, we have no quarrel with

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you. We shall not fire unless you do.' What messages the mines carried was hard to tell; it depended on how you reacted to having your feet blown off at the ankles or most of your face torn away, whether that made you hate the Germans or just hate advancing into Germany. In any case both the mines and the messages showed careful preparation.

In most sectors, until September 6, the German troops retired without firing a shot, sometimes not even returning French fire. From then on they began resisting firmly but with tact. Here and there, in the Forest of Warndt, notably, the French by calculated bold maneuvers forced the German resistance and increased their holdings of German territory after stiff local skirmishes, but still without serious losses. By the middle of September the French had advanced to an average depth of three miles into German territory, apparently reaching a line which the German Staff had selected in advance as the line of resistance. From then on the French did not insist, and a month later they withdrew to defensive positions inside the French frontier, apparently forestalling the German intention of driving them back, and inflicting relatively heavy losses on the German advance-guard as it rushed into the vacuum.

There was nothing very strange about all this; it was sound strategy. Before September 20, even with seasoned troops, the French could not have launched a serious offensive into Germany because of their mobilization. After that German reinforcements were arriving on the Siegfried Line, there was no more eastern front, and winter was drawing on. Nor was it entirely inexplicable that both the Allied and the German air forces refrained from bombing, except with propaganda pamphlets—the first and highly significant act of war carried out by the Allies was a flight



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of British bombers over Germany in the night of September 3 to September 4, dropping pamphlets against the régime.

What was strange was the aspect of the front, admittedly the theater of a minor-key war for reasons of higher strategy. Early in October, I paid a two-day visit to the Lorraine front in a party conducted by the American military attaché, Colonel Horace Fuller, with nine other American correspondents, several French officers, and a group of army photographers and movie men following us for the enlightenment of posterity. Yet with this unwieldy caravan we rolled for miles within easy range of the German field batteries, often in view of their observation posts, and never a shell came near us. We drove as a caravan into the Forest of Warndt, to within six hundred yards of the French outposts, without getting out of the cars.

Once we walked a quarter of a mile to a French battery position, where a group of field guns were unleashing what sounded to inexperienced ears like a terrific bombardment of the enemy. With naked eyes we saw scores of French shells burst quick and vicious on a German crest barely two miles away. Some of us thought we heard German shells coming back, passing overhead, but there was doubt. Officers told us that sometime during the day the enemy artillery would certainly retaliate, but most likely with Old Testament justness on a French advanced position. Counter-battery fire existed, but was rather rare, being a serious form of war, from the artilleryman's point of view.

So it was, as far as I could gather, along the whole front. It could not be said that the aspect of the front was wholly humane, for incidents occasionally flared up, duels provoked by gunners' vanity, murderous ambushes, or even infantry raids to avenge a fallen comrade. Sometimes great stretches of the front would

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blaze up, apparently from sheer nervousness; for an hour or two guns would roar, squandering thousands of dollars' worth of steel and explosive, then mysteriously they would fall silent and stretcher-bearers would pick up the few wounded and the fewer dead, repair squads would start working on damaged shelters and trenches, and all would be as before. Even in war men cannot live in proximity to one another without occasionally getting on one another's nerves.

The strange thing is that the first of these local incidents, the first casualties, the first violation of a tacit understanding about artillery objectives, did not, according to the ineluctable laws of war, start a progressive vendetta which would go on until there was peace.

Correspondents in Luxembourg who from neutral soil were able to study the effects of both German and French fire were convinced that the gunners on both sides deliberately tried not only to avoid damaging civilian property but to avoid inflicting serious losses.) The uncanny accuracy with which shells framed objectives where infantry were certain to be sheltered, dropping all around but almost never directly upon the target, was too frequent to be accidental, the observers in Luxembourg thought. Whether that is true or not, I saw myself some striking demonstrations of the live-and-let-live principle.

Perhaps the strangest example of all was the visit I made in the month of November to the Alsatian front, where I lunched in Strasbourg — a dead city with hungry dogs and autumn leaves in the streets. But the beer hall where we ate was warm and noisy with life, like the one wing in a haunted castle where the family lives. After lunch we drove up the bank of the Rhine, across from the somber, wintry mound of the Black Forest to a

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French outpost on the riverbank. Camouflage screens had been put up, but again we were a numerous caravan, and on our way to the post we were several times in view of the Germans and within easy rifle or even pistol shot. Being in an American uniform, the prescribed dress for war correspondents, and likely therefore to be mistaken at a distance for a British officer — an unpopular kind of mistake — added to the unreal but definitely tense awareness of the front. Up in a lookout post gazing across the yellow swirling river at Germany, we saw a strange thing. Two men were rowing a boat in an arm of the river directly across from us, and there were cans in the boat containing, probably, soup, and the uniforms of the men were *feldgrau*.

There was a colonel commanding the riverbank defenses standing next to me, and I asked him if this were not a strange thing.

He said no, it was a perfectly natural thing, for the soup was being taken to a German blockhouse marooned on an islet by high waters, and if someone did not row to it in a boat there was no other way of communication.

‘Well,’ I asked him, ‘if you did not have us on your hands wouldn’t you shoot at them?’

‘No,’ he answered, ‘because then the Germans would shoot back and we would have to shoot harder because we had started it and so on, and all for what? Maybe a couple of hundred of my men killed for nothing.’

This was a colonel of the regular army speaking. He went on to explain the theory of letting live by drawing a distinction between offensive and inoffensive activity on the part of the enemy. Rowing soup was obviously an inoffensive activity, but setting up a new battery which might some day fire on his men could be construed as an offensive one. Therefore, when observers spotted

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enemy artillery moving about, the French guns fired at them more or less. Apparently both sides had allotted the enemy a reasonable quota of guns, enough for him to feel secure, and this was tolerated, while any addition was taken as a symptom of aggressive intentions. The strange thing was that the German and French artillery officers, presumably without consultation, were in agreement on the quotas.

The tactical conceptions prevailing in all modern armies facilitated such tacit understandings between enemies because offensives called for such formidable concentrations of artillery that there could be no uncertainty about intentions, once the concentration was discovered. Also the principle, 'Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes,' had come to be pretty generally accepted when experts began looking back on World War statistics and calculating the wastage in munitions and effectives. Wars of attrition work both ways, and generals of our generation, like those of the pre-Napoleonic era, are inclined to leave the enemy pretty much alone when they cannot annihilate him.

The generals, however, might have been a little surprised to see how literally the men at the front expressed these conceptions by their actions. For instance, the Rhine colonel told me that that same morning he had been making an inspection along the riverbank and enemy sentinels, recognizing him, had motioned imperatively to take cover, which he did. Probably the sentinels, like honest Germans, were shocked at this exhibition of French frivolity, but of course not shocked enough to shoot.

• For a long time the French in this sector had Austrians across the river from them, and they were pleasant neighbors; in the evening the French *poilus* used to listen to their songs. Then one

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day a young Austrian walked to the riverbank and shouted across, 'Watch out from now on, we are being relieved by Prussians.'

In all modern wars between civilized peoples it was like this whenever the front was quiet and the lines close together. And this time nearly the whole front was quiet.

When the weather was good the aerial front was very active, as active often as in the last war, (but the troops on the ground participated only remotely in the air war,) certainly less than enthusiastic fans participate in a baseball game. They liked seeing enemy planes shot down, but never got enthusiastic as fans do over a home run. Because of this I saw what I think will remain the strangest picture of the war.

Coming out of one of the great forts of the Maginot Line, blinking in the sunlight, there was the regimental band sitting in the open, in the sun, playing some swinging march in our honor, very gay and cheerful, but the bass drum seemed to be out of control. Then I looked up and saw one of those mushroom beds in the sky, the greatest I had ever seen, and became aware it was not the drum but all the anti-aircraft batteries in the sector firing. Six black Messerschmidts were skipping like water-spiders across the sky, often directly overhead, shredding the floating clouds with their propellers and leaving a long, cottony train like ski tracks in fresh snow. Some soldiers were looking upward with mild interest, but the band kept on playing, and I shook hands with the officers and got into my car, and as we disappeared round a bend the band was attacking another number, a tango this time, and the batteries were still firing.

Stranger even than anything we saw were the stories about the war we picked up at the front or in Paris. There were picturesque

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examples of German propaganda, blaring French waltzes from loudspeakers between translations of Hitler's speeches, turning floodlights on engineers working in no-man's-land at night in order to help them out, warning French infantry by loudspeakers when the artillery was going to fire and where the shells would fall.

One story that I cannot absolutely vouch for, though it was told seriously by serious persons, was that when President Albert Lebrun visited the Rhine front, probably at the same post I had seen, there was a huge poster on the German banks with the message: 'Welcome to the President,' and simultaneously a German loudspeaker began playing the *Marseillaise*.

Another time the Germans put up a poster facing the French lines saying: 'French soldiers, return home. The English have taken over all northern France and are sleeping with your wives.' Whereupon the French erected an equally huge signboard facing the German lines reading: 'What do we care? We're from the south.'

All that is propaganda, of course. So was it propaganda when early in September the commander of a German submarine stopped a French fishing boat in the Bay of Biscay and sent the captain a bottle of brandy and a box of cigars, with his compliments, and then went on his way. So was it propaganda when German soldiers, instead of firing at low-flying scouting planes, stood up and waved handkerchiefs.

However, I don't think it was entirely propaganda when a French truck, during the September advance, got lost and went through the German lines until it was frantically waved back by soldiers in *feldgrau* uniforms.

There was also the story of our cook's son, told when he came

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back on leave, about one of his comrades who got lost in the dusk in no-man's-land and came on a German soldier also lost, so they sat down and had a cigarette, then separated.

Incidents like that were common during the last war, but not in the first months. And I do not remember any story of the last war quite as odd as the one told by an officer just back from the front, about four comrades of his. They went for a stroll in the Forest of Warndt, these four French officers, and suddenly in a clearing they came upon four German officers, also strolling.

For once it was the Teuton who was the more quick-witted, for after staring for about thirty seconds one of the German officers clicked heels and saluted, the others followed his example, the French returned the salute, then both parties turned on their heels and walked away.

There were other strangenesses about the war, too, which correspondents discovered on their trips to the front. In Paris, for instance, we had been reminding our readers not to judge the importance of the French advance into the Saar solely by the depth in miles of penetration, pointing out that even these few miles sufficed to bring French artillery within range of most of the coal mines of the basin and of important industrial centers like Volklingen, with its great steel mills. We did not know whether the French artillery had actually destroyed the mines and the steel mills of the Saar, but we knew that it could, and therefore took it for granted that a highly important sector of German economy was paralyzed by the French advance.

Actually when I reached the Lorraine front in November I discovered that the mines and factories of the Saar were running normally. The French had in the meantime withdrawn from the Forest of Warndt, where they had been sitting on the richest part

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of the coal basin, but their long-range guns could still shell most of the Saar area. One of the high-ranking generals of the French Army explained to me that World War experience had proved it was difficult to prevent the exploitation of mines and factories by long-distance shelling, and it was not worth wasting shells and provoking reprisals by making an ineffectual attempt. The explanation did not entirely satisfy me. An obviously better one comes to mind: that by sparing the Saar industrial basin with their artillery, the French were at the same time sparing the Briey iron basin in northern Lorraine from German bombing raids. It might well be that the Briey basin was more important to French economy than the Saar basin was to the German.

In any case, when I visited the great French iron mines and foundries up against the Luxembourg border I found them functioning normally, although they could easily have been crippled, if not entirely destroyed, by repeated bombing, perhaps even by long-range artillery. Not only that, but despite official efforts to discourage journalistic curiosity on this point there were serious reasons for suspecting that some amount of French iron ore was still reaching Germany via Luxembourg, and some amount of German coke reaching France via Belgium, so that each belligerent was indirectly supplying the enemy with artillery shells which would provide the basis later for economic exchanges of a more direct character.

Those who have read Clarence Streit's remarkable book, *Where Iron Is, There Is the Fatherland*, will recall that the inactivity on the Briey sector during the World War gave rise to a certain amount of unpleasant suspicion. A young British journalist, who swore to me that he had seen French iron ore on the Lorraine border being loaded into freight cars of the German State Rail-



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ways on the Luxembourg side of the frontier, expressed the same suspicion when he said:

'Before I went to Luxembourg I was all ready to join up. Now I am going to take this war easy. I don't feel like dying for Krupp and Wendel and the Arbed Corporation.'

I would not stake my soul that the business interests of Krupp and Wendel and of the Arbed Corporation, which is a Luxembourg concern with international capital, have nothing to do with the restraint shown by French and German gunners, but I do not believe they were dominant factors. To me the legend of the trusts, as an offshoot of Marxist mythology, is more than anything else a symptom of our *mal de siècle*, the suspicion and resentment with which the individual regards the social machine which he has helped to build and of which he is a functioning part. Some sincere and bellicose idealists experience a neurotic distress at the mere suggestion (that private interests can continue to exist in time of war, let alone conflict, as they so often do in time of peace, with the public interest.) In my opinion these idealists have not only a naïve conception of society but also a naïve conception of war, based probably on the personification of national groups and the theory that war is when they lose their tempers and go for one another.

Actually, war is now recognized by nearly all enlightened military theorists to be primarily a duel of wills and a weighing up of economic resources. Armaments, tactics, even strategy, achieve victory by breaking down the combative spirit of the adversary, or exhausting his supply of essential war materials, or both. In the last war economic collapse in Germany helped to produce a collapse of morale which led to a collapse of the front.

The new element in this war is the discovery by the Germans,

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and its somewhat dimmer realization by the French, of the psychological principle that morale depends more on social than on purely individual factors. Instead of counting on hunger, hardship, fear, and discouragement to produce a collapse of individual morale which becomes rapidly general, the German technique seems to aim chiefly at disrupting the socio-psychological ties between individuals which make them act as part of a social group. Its target is what Gustav Le Bon and other psychologists of that school term the collective soul. The collective soul in the German theory dominates and inspires the individual soul. 'A soldier has a good fighting morale because he loves and trusts his leaders, because he believes whole-heartedly in an ideal shared by his fellows. To undermine his morale, the quickest means is to shake his faith in his ideal or his confidence in his leaders, or even to destroy by physical means the contact between leaders and followers. In Poland the Germans tried all these forms of attack, but the amazing success of the *Blitzkrieg* was above all due to the physical disruption of communication between troops in the field and the centers of command. Cut-off from his chief, the Polish soldier ceased to be a soldier and became merely a member of an armed mob, which is always a facile prey for an army.

This is how war is fought in our time. Hitler, with the insight of genius, even realized that it was not necessary to call it war, and won victory after victory without the rest of the world's realizing what it was. When the French finally caught up with Hitler and decided to fight him with his own weapons, they found it advantageous on the contrary to call it war, using the magic in the word against him. But on the whole they are fighting this war very much as Hitler had fought his peace. That is why I was

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able to see two Germans peacefully rowing a boat containing cans of soup between the lines, and why the iron mines of Lorraine and the coal mines of the Saar are still working within cannon-shot of the enemy.

From the point of view of the spectator this does not make a very exciting war, or even a very convincing one, since its aspect is different from the traditional aspect of war and the human mind always resents anything which is unlike what it expected. To me it seems one of the most dramatic life-or-death struggles between peoples in modern history, much more dramatic than the World War because the face and form of Europe will change completely, depending on who wins it. Yet in America they were already calling it the 'bore war' as I started this book, and some more outspoken skeptics, unable to believe there could be war without hundreds of thousands dying, frankly declared it was a phony war. This reaction seemed particularly violent among those Americans who bleated the most loudly when they thought it was going to be a 'real' war, which was to be expected, I suppose; but there were even traces of the same human, cheated feeling in France, among the civilian population — I did not hear any soldiers making this complaint.

Jean Giraudoux, the poet disguised as France's master of propaganda, made this eloquent answer to these disappointed members of the audience in a speech before the American Club in Paris on December 14:

'Too many minds persist in the idea of a war simply military whose episodes are rapid and picturesque with military engagements, routs, victories. For two years we have been in the middle of Hitler's war. The great military operations are like operations of banking. The gold is underground in cellars, the

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army behind its concrete lines. They are treasures which must be kept intact as long as possible and risked only at desperate or decisive moments. In order to know what war has come to, let us get in touch with Hitler. "Our real wars will be waged before the military operation," he says. "We will not use our massed armies as in 1914. Artillery preparation for attack in trench warfare will be replaced in the future by the psychological decomposition of the enemy through propaganda before the armies can go into action."

'Such is Hitler's war. We are fighting this kind of war, too. We think we are gaining by doing so.'

In the main I agree with this interpretation of the war. Since it is the official theme of French propaganda, it might seem that I have simply fallen victim to the magic of Giraudoux's prose, or perhaps to more substantial allurements. The answer to that is that my conception of Hitler's war antedates official French acceptance of it as a propaganda thesis, from which it might be concluded that I am able to influence French policy, a conclusion as sound as the one that I have been bought for French propaganda. This happens to be one of the occasions when propaganda and reality coincide.

Even so, I have two reserves in regard to the official French thesis. For one thing, it is difficult to eliminate the suspicion that there may be a secret understanding of some kind between the Allies and certain elements in Germany, who are waiting for the opportune moment to repudiate the Nazi régime. If such an agreement, reminiscent of Chinese bandit wars, does exist, it is very difficult to say which belligerent is tricking the other, but it is a naïve form of cynicism to assume from this that there is an agreement between both to trick the bystanders. On the con-

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trary, this would be a characteristic manifestation of the war of nerves. Hitler always seeks to have secret allies in the enemy's camp, but if the French and British have found any in Germany, I suspect that they are double traitors who perhaps do not know themselves whom they will betray finally. I know positively that Goering conveyed hints to the Allied Governments that if they would just be patient he would take over power when the time came and offer them acceptable peace terms. As far as I could gather, these hints were taken in Paris simply as a German propaganda maneuver, but perhaps there have been other hints from less suspicious sources.

The other reserve is linked with this suspicion of secret negotiations between the Allies and supposed oppositional elements in Germany. It is that a great many persons in France and England, some of them influential, secretly hope that the psychological preparation for attack will win the war or at least make a tolerable peace possible, and that the real military assault will never take place, that is, against Germany.

This seems to me one of those things which are so desirable to happen that it is dangerous to hope for them. Also, knowing the power of words over men, I wonder whether finally the old-fashioned magic in the word 'war' may not magically convert this from a modern into an old-fashioned war, the generals and peoples succumbing to tradition.

In the next chapters, which will deal with the actual technique of psychological war and with human reactions to it, we shall look particularly closely to see what effect the word 'war,' as distinguished from the modern conception of it, is having or is likely to have on the thoughts of men.

# IX

## KILLING WITH KINDNESS

THE OUTBREAK of real war, such as it was, on the Western Front proved to be the apotheosis rather than the end of the war of nerves. While the contact of the two most highly mechanized and scientifically perfect armies in the history of war produced only daily outbursts of Indian fighting between little patrols skulking behind trees and potting at one another with individual weapons, the major front in the first six months of the war was the front of the mind. All the techniques of spiritual aggression or defense which had won for the last years of peace the name 'war of nerves' were now exhibited more nakedly, on a larger scale, and were more tightly synchronized in view of concrete strategic objectives. Propaganda, in the broadest sense of the word, was deluged over the belligerent and neutral populations on a scale far exceeding that of 1914-18.

It was not quite the same kind of propaganda as in the last war, however, and even politically sophisticated readers often could not see through it because in their minds they were still fighting the last war. Take, for instance, the case of a French friend of mine, an intelligent, well-educated young man, a graduate of the Paris School of Political Sciences, who came into my

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office a few weeks before the war to consult with me about a magazine article he was writing on the subject of propaganda.

“‘No More Skull-Cramming’ is the title of my article,” he said. ‘You know our expression skull-cramming (*bourrage des crânes*), of course? It’s about the same as your ballyhoo: doping the people with lies and propaganda and synthetic nightmares. My point is that war propaganda is a thing of the past, even if we have war again.’

‘How do you figure that?’ I asked.

‘Well, I have been reading up on propaganda in the last war, all those atrocity stories about little Belgian children with their hands cut off, and cadaver factories, and all the rest of the horrors, and it seems to me that the whole business has been so thoroughly exposed that the Governments will not dare to try it again. They must realize by now that propaganda carried to such lengths defeats its own purpose.’

With the war of nerves then raging, my friend could have found plenty of evidence in any newspaper to refute his thesis that skull-cramming is *passé*. Looking back on it today, his remarks have a certain grim humor. Yet he was partly right on one point — the decline of the atrocity story — though there have already appeared some picturesque exceptions to his rule and others will doubtless turn up if the war takes a more violent turn.

Like most people, he thought of war propaganda exclusively in terms of atrocity stories, which were perhaps the most striking type of propaganda in the last war. The infamous campaigns of organized hating, worked up largely by atrocity stories between 1914 and 1918, have left not only a bad taste but deep mental scars as well. The Germans, who were the principal victims of a

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propaganda which systematically and without qualifications painted the enemy as beasts, have reacted by becoming beasts. The people of the United States, and even in some degree the peoples of France and England, whose indignations were prostituted in the interests of military victory, today protect themselves neurotically against such exploitation by failing to react when confronted with authentic atrocities. Hence official propagandists in this war discourage the atrocity story. The lurid tales from Poland about poisoned chocolates and balloons of mustard gas dropped by German aviators never made anything but a brief and rather shamefaced appearance in the Allied press, and when they began to sprout spontaneously in France the censorship kept them out of the papers and off the air. On our first trip to the front, for instance, several officers cited cases of soldiers who had been treated for suspicious-looking burns, similar to those produced by mustard gas, but the military censors would not let me mention the matter, even in this vague form, on the grounds that it was too serious an accusation to launch without proof.

The great difference between the 1914 and the 1940 versions of war propaganda is that the former prostituted the hatred of evil to produce raw hate, whereas the latter prostitutes the love of peace to produce sheer defeatism or even cowardice. The basic strategy of the German psychological warriors is to paralyze the conduct of the war by the Allies by destroying the combative spirit of their soldiers and citizens. The basic strategy of the Allies is to separate the German people from their leaders.

In both cases, along with other forms of psychological attack, fraternization propaganda is obviously destined to play a great rôle. 'We hate your leaders and your cause but we love you' has come to be the theme-song of both German and Allied propa-



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ganda. Convincing the enemy that he was loved, that only tender solicitude for his real interests caused you to take up arms against him, has become one of the principal tasks of military propagandists.

The result is a strange and unwholesome paradox. In many ways the state of war between the great powers of Europe has produced a closer and more intense exchange of ideas between peoples than anything seen in time of peace. Every belligerent Government has multiplied its broadcasts in enemy languages, and to secure the attention of enemy listeners has mingled propaganda messages with various forms of entertainment and more or less authentic news. When relations between France and Soviet Russia became strained after Stalin's attack on Finland, the first objective symptom of a crisis which seemed likely to culminate in military hostilities was the addition of a program in Russian to the French foreign-language broadcasts.

A striking feature of all the belligerent radio programs for enemy countries is the reasonableness, sometimes even the friendliness or at least the informal, matey tone, of the nightly monologues which official broadcasters address to the invisible enemy audiences. Much of the direct propaganda by written message or symbolic act at the front has the same comradely character.

A naïve observer would have concluded that the war of nerves is a humane and civilized *Ersatz* for real war. He would have been wrong. Along with the love propaganda, and almost in the same breath, he could hear hymns of hate, blood-curdling threats, and witness diabolically clever attempts to destroy the whole social and psychic universe of the victim of propaganda. Also the whole theory of modern propaganda, as it is taught in every war school of every country in Europe, is that the purpose of

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fraternization propaganda, or of any other propaganda, is to disarm the enemy morally before subjecting him to a physical assault. This is not a peculiar feature of this war, due to peculiar political conditions, but a general characteristic of modern war in all conditions. In other words, the human mind has discovered that even love can be an offensive weapon, and modern morals admit its use as such.

The following extracts from my diary, dated November, 1939, give a subjective impression of the nightmare which the propaganda duel on the air became after the outbreak of war:

'In this phase of the war the ether duel is the most striking thing. All night long the Allies broadcast in German, telling of their victories, denouncing propaganda lies, telling the German people the reality. There are also broadcasts in Czech and Polish and the neutral languages. The air is rendered obscene by belligerent stations hurling pathetic appeals into space, giving matey chats in attempts to fraternize, exchanging abuse, sowing seeds of doubt and treason.

'The German broadcasts in French and those of the three traitors of Stuttgart are particularly striking. One of the German speakers sounds like an Englishman and, according to a report which is probably untrue, is Baillie Stewart, the traitor of the Tower. We call him Lord Haw Haw. He speaks nearly flawless English and is a real artist. Sometimes he is matey and cheery, trying to convince his listeners that the war is all nonsense. For several nights he ran a little skit — an imaginary conversation between an Englishman named Smith and his German counterpart named Schmidt, who met in a Swiss hotel and decided to argue the war out in a cheerful way over glasses of whiskey and beer. Smith, strangely enough, turns out to be a poor debater

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and in general does not appear to be very bright, and Schmidt, though he keeps smiling, hits from the shoulder, giving his adversary a dialectical drubbing. In the end Smith hears that the Government is planning to house a group of evacuated slum children from London in his country home and rushes back to oppose the outrage, thus terminating the argument with friend Schmidt.

'At first it seemed surprising that the Germans should ridicule the English with such a heavy hand for an English audience; then the reason became clear: it is the English ruling classes who are being ridiculed, denounced as incompetent and mischievous. The main German propaganda game is to shake the confidence of the masses in their Government and leaders, to make it seem that their blundering has got the country into war and that their incompetence will lose it. Winston Churchill is target number 1, and the sinking of the *Royal Oak* at Scapa Flow was exploited as an example of his incompetence. For several weeks after the sinking of the *Courageous* Lord Haw Haw used to ask dramatically, "Mr. Churchill, where is the *Oak Royal*?" in such a sinister tone that it was hard not to believe that there was something back of it. Then for a while there were blood-curdling threats to wipe out England, the real war was going to start, and so forth. Tonight he made an impassioned talk on the British ruling classes, jeering at their "humanitarianism" while allowing ex-soldiers to starve, and so forth. "Always the German penchant for doubt propaganda.'"

For their French propaganda the Nazis had a French journalist and writer named Paul Ferdonnet, who has become famous as the traitor of Stuttgart. After he fled to Germany and began openly to broadcast the propaganda of Doctor Goebbels to his ex-coun-

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trymen from German stations, the French papers consistently wrote of him as an obscure and unimportant crook. In reality Ferdonnet, though not a front-rank figure in French journalism, once had considerable standing, particularly among the super-patriots of the Right.

Backed up by two assistant traitors, the traitor of Stuttgart went on the air several times a night to prove that Hitler was the best friend of the French people and England their worst enemy, 'England means to fight this war to the last Frenchman,' the traitors of Stuttgart tirelessly repeated. When they ran short of more timely arguments they could always fall back on history. Had not the English burned Joan of Arc? Had they not smashed Napoleon? The French authorities did everything to jam the propaganda broadcast from Stuttgart. In the Paris region their efforts were pretty successful — too successful, in fact, because they also jammed some of the British broadcast in French. In the provinces, however, Stuttgart could be picked up without too much difficulty, and as far as I could gather was widely listened to even by perfectly patriotic Frenchmen.

The Allies not only maintained Haw Haws and Ferdonnets of their own to talk to the German people, but went Doctor Goebbels one better by taking over the clandestine Liberty Station run by German *émigrés*. The Liberty Station was supposed to be broadcasting from inside Germany in impudent defiance of the Gestapo, and it constantly changed its wave length to escape detection. It is possible that at the beginning the station did actually broadcast from within Germany, but there is considerable evidence that it is now established outside the frontiers of the Reich. In any case much of the anti-Nazi propaganda it diffuses is played from phonograph records made in London.

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The French shortly after the beginning of the war opened an Austrian Liberty Station operating on the same principle. The night after Hitler's Munich beer-hall speech the Austrian station broadcast an answer in almost the same language, with the same vehemence, with the same rudeness, and with even more hate, but with a soft Austrian accent. Every accusation of Hitler's against England and France was answered with biting sarcasm. The speaker ended by announcing in the same solemn, sinister tone which Lord Haw Haw uses in addressing Winston Churchill: 'Herr Hitler, the day of Austrian liberation is approaching.'

In retaliation for the Austrian and German Liberty Stations the Germans early in February reinforced their propaganda broadcast from Stuttgart in French with a clandestine station called Radio Humanité, ostensibly operated by Communist refugees from France.

A few days after the mysterious death on the Polish front of General von Fritsch, the B.B.C. broadcast during their German hour a program dedicated to the dead general. There was a flattering biography of Fritsch, 'the kind of man we respect,' followed by some indirect hints that he had been assassinated by the Gestapo, then some detailed and unflattering comparisons between Fritsch's chivalrous character and the characters of Hitler, Goering, and other Nazi leaders. In conclusion the British speaker said, 'And now, dear listeners, in homage to the memory of this gallant soldier we are going to play for you that fine old German military song "Ich hatte einen Kameraden."'

And they did, with great feeling.

What effect these propaganda broadcasts have had on morale in the various belligerent countries is hard to determine, but it seems that in all countries they are widely listened to, despite the

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efforts of the authorities to prevent it. In France a wartime decree forbade cafés and other public establishments to tune in on enemy broadcasts, but in Germany it is forbidden to do so even in one's home — on pain of death in certain cases.

Despite the risk, a great many Germans listen in on the Allies' propaganda programs. The following anecdote from an American colleague in Berlin seems to confirm this:

A Catholic family was officially informed by the Nazi authorities that their son, returning to Germany on a neutral ship, should be given up for lost as the ship was long overdue. They went into mourning and ordered a Mass for the repose of the young man's soul. The next night they happened to tune in on a British station and heard the name of their son read off from a list of prisoners taken on board a neutral ship.

Ten minutes later the neighborhood butcher knocked at their door, and after looking around nervously said he had picked up a foreign station on his radio 'just by chance' and had heard their son's name mentioned. He had hardly left before another neighbor knocked, on the same errand; and so on, all evening.

The parents were afraid that if they cancelled the Mass the police would ask questions, so it was celebrated all the same — only afterward there was a lot of unseemly cheerfulness at a little party they gave for the neighbors.

The straight military propaganda at the front was in some ways more picturesque than the radio propaganda. It was part of Hitler's psychological strategy to make the war seem unreal to the French and British peoples — to annul the reality of war, as psychologists say. For this mere written propaganda was not enough, and ingenious German propagandists supplemented it with symbolical acts based on the principle that if they did not

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act like enemies the French soldiers opposite them would not be able to think of them as such.

Thus, when the French first advanced into German territory at the beginning of September, the German soldiers, acting under orders, retired without firing a shot, leaving placards and banners written in French telling the poilus that Germany had no quarrel with France, that German troops would not fire upon them unless fired upon, and so forth.

A few weeks later they began using armored trucks mounting powerful loudspeakers, to run up close to the front and bombard the French lines with translations from Hitler's speeches and other Nazi propaganda messages. As in the Spanish civil war, where propaganda by loudspeakers was extensively utilized, the Germans artfully interspersed the speeches with musical selections, including 'Parlez-moi d'amour,' a French favorite.

When Captain Leo Deschanel, son of the mad French President Paul Deschanel, was killed on the Saar front and his body picked up by a German patrol, the Germans buried him with great pomp on a high hill looking toward France, and brought the traitor of Stuttgart to broadcast a whole ceremony in French for his ex-countryman.

Some of the most spectacular examples of the new war propaganda occurred on the quiet Rhine front, especially in the early days of the war. Here is one strictly authentic case: In the first week in September French soldiers in the black of night were unloading barges in the river port of Strasbourg. Suddenly the Germans from their bank of the river turned a powerful searchlight on them. 'Do not be afraid, French Kameraden,' a German officer shouted at them through a loudspeaker. 'We just turned the light on so you could see better. We have had

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the same work on our side and we know how it is.' After a few minutes the French decided to take the enemy at his word, and thanks to the free illumination accomplished two nights' work in one. On several other occasions when German guns were for some reason about to fire, loudspeakers would warn the French *poilu* to take cover, sometimes even indicating where the shells might be expected to land.

The French General Staff, not having as much faith in the magic virtue of propaganda as the Germans, did not approve of coddling the enemy in this way. It was only after several months of war that they began using loudspeakers to broadcast propaganda at the front as the Germans had been doing from the first. The British, however, when they learned that there was a shortage of coffee in Germany, risked the lives of dozen of pilots and spent perhaps thousands of dollars to bombard German towns and villages with little token sacks of coffee, just as Franco's German and Italian aviators bombed starving Madrid and Barcelona with loaves of bread.

The Finns on one occasion did even better. Instead of just making symbolical presents to the enemy, they dropped tracts on the Russian lines offering to pay cash for equipment brought over by deserters and attached a price list: '400 roubles for a revolver; 10,000 U.S. dollars and a free trip abroad for a plane.'

This is the 1940 version of war propaganda. It is less truculent and blatant than the 1914 version. It produces fewer fake atrocity stories and hymns of hate. Often it wears a bland and good-natured mask — and is ten times deadlier and more cruel for that. Sometimes it strains the quality of mercy to the breaking-point. I am thinking of a White Russian friend of ours who went to Finland to try to improve the living conditions of



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Red Russian prisoners. 'The better they are treated the more they will listen to the anti-Communist propaganda we are going to make among them,' he explained.

'How heartless!' my wife commented. 'Don't you think the poor devils have had enough propaganda thrown at them?'

It is still too early to say what effect the new techniques of fraternization propaganda have upon public opinion. My own impression is that Hitler has been successful in preventing the French people at least from developing a real war spirit, but this is true, if at all, only for the civilian population. So far no particular effect seems to have been achieved at the front by these methods. The traditional idea of the enemy is so deeply rooted in the military mind that such propaganda tricks cannot easily alter it.

In fact, judging from what I hear from friends who have been at the front, the chief reaction of the average French soldier to the German attempts at fraternization is a mixture of hate and loathing. It seems probable that the 'peace offensives' of this war will leave the same deep scars that the atrocity stories of the last war did.

One reason why fraternization propaganda in its immediate effects seemed to defeat its own purpose is that it was accompanied, particularly on the German side, by propaganda of a very different character, of a character so aggressive and ruthless that even simple minds could see that it was attack and not persuasion, that it was intended not to pave the way for peace but for a Nazi victory which would be totalitarian and ruthless. It is possible to make the enemy think you really want peace by pretending to want it; in this case the victims do not realize they are being bombarded with dissolvent propaganda intended

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to eat away their morale, perhaps on the eve of a military offensive. When, however, the attack is ostensibly directed against morale, it arouses reflexes of defense, like any attack.

This was the case with much German propaganda in France and England during the first six months of the war. The Nazi specialty of moral terrorism which had proved so effective before Munich naturally played a big rôle in the attack on French and British morale. Sometimes terror was used quite openly, by means of flamboyant threats published by the Nazi press — threats to wipe out Paris and London by air bombardments, threats of landing an army of parachutists in England, sinister hints of a secret weapon, etc. At other times Nazi agents in the neutral countries or even in France and England attempted to sow panic by means of whispering campaigns. Neutrals with pro-German sympathies were enlisted without their own knowledge as auxiliaries in the campaign to demoralize the Allies by whispering campaigns of terror. A good example was an American colleague, a man of good faith, who arrived in France after several months in Belgium and Holland where he had particularly cultivated German agents as news sources.

‘You know,’ he told me confidentially, ‘Hitler’s secret weapon is an explosive so powerful that the Germans have not even dared to experiment with it. They are not sure they can control it, and may never use it for that reason.’

Another otherwise intelligent American with pro-German sympathies, but in no sense a conscious agent of German propaganda, told me at the outbreak of war that the Germans had secretly mined underneath the bed of the Rhine and would blow up the principal forts of the Maginot Line whenever it suited their purpose.

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In the neutral countries of Europe, already terrified at the idea of becoming battlefields for the great powers, the Nazi terror propaganda was extremely effective, and the synthetic war scare along classic Munich lines could still be brought off whenever Nazi diplomacy wanted to turn the heat on. It soon became apparent that keeping Holland and Belgium in a permanent state of terror was part of the German strategy, although of the two great war scares which broke out in the Low Countries in the first six months of the war, the first one, the November alarm, may have been the work of Allied rather than German propaganda.

The false alarm over the invasion of Belgium in January, however, was exclusively a propaganda fake manufactured by the Nazis to unnerve the Belgians and increase their awe of Germany. It was achieved, not by propaganda in the ordinary sense of the word, but by that stage-managing of reality which is the highest form of the propagandist's art in our time. It was the perfect example of the synthetic nightmare.

First an obscure Nazi paper divulged details of formidable troop concentrations along the Dutch and Belgian borders. Then two German officers traveling by plane got 'lost' and had to land inside the Belgian frontier, carrying with them the plans of the German General Staff for the invasion of Belgium.

Then Herr von Ribbentrop called in the Belgian Ambassador, worked up a quarrel over some economic demands the Belgians had refused, and apparently flew into a towering rage. In the end he ordered the Ambassador out of his office, screaming after him, 'You want war; well, you'll get it.'

The rest was done for the Germans by the Belgian Government, which ordered dramatic measures of precaution along the

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frontier and sent an S.O.S. to General Gamelin, and by the French, British, and American press. When Allied propagandists counter-attacked in the French and British papers with the version that Belgium's courage and alertness had forestalled a German invasion, the Belgians grew more frightened than ever, which was all to the good from the German point of view.

The purely military threat calculated to terrify the Belgians was supplemented by direct defeatist propaganda aimed at breaking down the Belgian will-to-resist, perhaps in view of an eventual real invasion. Nazi agents went about distributing to Belgian soldiers Belgian flags with a Swastika stamped on them.

'Keep this flag,' they would explain, 'and when the Germans come in sew it on your tunic. Then you will be sure to be well treated.'

Some of the Nazi propaganda stunts were so odd that they seemed almost like schoolboy pranks. The purpose back of them, however, was not to enjoy a joke at the enemy's expense, but to discredit his leadership and organization by ridicule and at the same time to sow doubt in his mind, to make him feel that he was encircled by treason. Here are some examples of this type of propaganda:

When Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden visited the French front, an official luncheon was organized for them in Lille. Naturally the whereabouts of such distinguished Allied visitors was a jealously guarded secret. Yet half an hour after they sat down to lunch, the menu was being read over the German radio, and it was correct in every detail.

I cannot guarantee that this anecdote is rigorously authentic, but it is plausible enough, and at the front I learned of even

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more remarkable exploits of Nazi propaganda espionage. A general told me that a few hours after German scouting planes had flown over the village where he had his headquarters the German radio broadcast an account of the flight, giving the exact situation and a description of his headquarters. A French friend, an officer at the front, told me from personal experience of an infantry unit which had become so demoralized that it had to be taken away from the sector, because five minutes after they had arrived German loudspeakers began telling them all that was known about them, their number, where they had come from, the names and records of their colonel and principal officers, and so forth.

Much time and money are spent and the lives of valuable men are risked in preparing such tricks. German spies who might have been employed on seemingly more important missions communicated Mr. Churchill's luncheon menu and the itinerary of President Lebrun by means of clandestine radio transmitters. These transmitters, sometimes of pocket size, always with a feeble radius, could be heard only by German scouting planes, sent over specially for that purpose. During the first months of the war the French police sometimes bagged as many as twenty of these clandestine radio stations in a night, but the supply seemed inexhaustible, showing how thoroughly the Germans had built up their network of propaganda and espionage before the war started.

The Nazis employed the same technique in a more cruel and spectacular form in Poland. Not content with revealing to the Polish army and people by radio that they knew every move of the army, the Germans broadcast in Polish on the wave lengths of the principal Polish stations, concealing their identity. These

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German stations, disguised as Polish ones, did not at first give out German propaganda. Instead they announced to the Polish people the arrival of hundreds of British planes in Poland, Allied victories on the Western Front, and even the entrance of Italy into the war on the side of the Allies. Apparently the Germans had decided that the quickest way to shatter Polish morale was to arouse extravagant hopes which events would serve to dash in a few hours.

These are samples of the modern and scientific psychological warfare as distinguished from the old hit-or-miss propaganda. The conception is not peculiar to the Germans, but they are masters of the new tactics and even their strategical conceptions are sounder. They do not simply wage psychological warfare on a larger scale more unscrupulously, but they co-ordinate their attacks with military or political attacks in the way a good general co-ordinates all the arms in his command to attain precise objectives. Propagandists in the democratic countries still seem hypnotized by the conception of propaganda as a thing in itself, and do not see in true perspective its place in the strategy of total war. Putting it a little differently, one might say that the Allies wage psychological warfare by means of propaganda, whereas the Germans simply wage war psychologically.

In so far as they depend upon straight propaganda, the Nazi strategists prefer to attack from within by indirect means. They do not try to fool all the people all the time. They content themselves with sowing seeds of doubt and dissension in a social group. If only a few of the seeds fall on fertile ground, the group morale dissolves. When group morale dissolves, organization breaks down, leaving the group a prey to better-organized forces.

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Doing the job thoroughly on a national scale pre-supposes not only having numerous agents, deliberate *saboteurs*, in the enemy's camp, but also thousands of more or less unconscious accomplices or sympathizers. This is so, seeing that in these days you do not go to war, or even launch a big-scale propaganda attack, until you have built up such a 'fifth column' inside the enemy's forces. By this alliance — for it amounts to that — with Stalin, Hitler won a ready-made 'fifth column' in France and England in the Communist Party. When Nazi diplomacy had achieved this result, the German psychological services, with characteristic thoroughness, set to work to make sure that the sub-surface propaganda carried on by Communist cells in the democratic countries would support Nazi propaganda in the most effective possible manner.

Trustworthy White Russian sources which make a special study of Bolshevik propaganda informed me in December that both the official propaganda in the Soviet press and the secret instructions of the Comintern to agents abroad revealed a complete synchronization in themes with German propaganda. In different words the two propagandas put the emphasis on the same points. In German propaganda the war was described as a 'plutocratic' war, in Communist propaganda as a 'capitalist' war. Blame for it was laid by both on England — Jewish-dominated England in the German propaganda, 'capitalist-imperialist England' in Communist propaganda.

Though the Communist Party was outlawed in France and all its known bases broken up, the French police had a hard time suppressing the defeatist propaganda carried on by Communist agents in the factories and even sometimes at the front. Thanks to long practice, the Communists were extraordinarily

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clever in outwitting the law. Subversive handbills were distributed at factories at closing time, or slipped by unseen hands into the pockets of coats left in dressing-rooms. Once I found an almost microscopically printed Communist tract in a box of safety matches manufactured by the State.

Another Communist trick, which incidentally illustrates the indirect character of most modern propaganda, was to send forged or anonymous personal letters to soldiers at the front, giving them false news about their families. This at least was told to me by an army censor who, though obviously biased, was in a position to know what he was talking about. He even cited specific cases of letters received by soldiers at the front telling that the soldier's wife had run off with a British officer; that his children, evacuated to a country village, were dangerously ill owing to the inadequate care and food, and so forth. Often there was no obvious political propaganda at all in these fiendish letters. The object was merely to shake the soldier's nerves, make him hate the war.

An even more spectacular illustration of the same technique came to light in Paris in the early weeks of the war when the police arrested a number of men and women on the ground that they were 'professional weepers' employed by the Communist Party to travel around in public conveyances wearing deep mourning and giving an exaggerated exhibition of seemingly uncontrollable grief for the purpose of depressing public morale.

Getting names and postal addresses of soldiers at the front and of their families for mailing-lists was apparently one of the chief assignments of Communist agents. Either Nazi agents had the same instructions, or more probably they exchanged information with the Communists, for the German radio made



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a regular practice of broadcasting the names and home addresses of French 'prisoners' who had not yet been captured.

More dangerous even than the tracts and handbills and the anonymous letters were the whispering campaigns of alarmist or defeatist rumors started by German and Communist agents in France. Both the Communist and the Nazi whisperers concentrated their fire particularly on the British ally. One day our maid came back from the market saying that no more eggs were obtainable in France because they had all been bought up for the British army. This, of course, was completely false, in fact the shortage of eggs was purely local and momentary, but the frequency with which such rumors cropped up all over the country in regard to eggs or any other food product which ran short strongly suggests that they were systematically launched by enemy agents.

To counteract this dangerous form of propaganda the French Government established in every region brigades of propaganda detectives whose particular assignment was to deal with whispering campaigns. In addition to running down and arresting the authors of demoralizing rumors, the propaganda detectives were instructed to circulate in cafés and other public places and launch whispering campaigns of optimism.

Although they placed their main reliance on other forms of attack, the Germans, like the Allies, made frequent use of propaganda tracts dropped by plane behind the lines. There was a great difference, however, between the Nazi and the Allied — at least the British — conception of the propaganda tract as a psychological weapon. The tracts which the R.A.F. periodically showered on the German people were purely literary in their conception. Their purpose was to convince the reader by argu-

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ment that the war was unjust, that it was entirely the fault of Hitler and the Nazi Party, and that the way to get out of it was to overthrow the régime. One reason for the weakness of these tracts, I was told by a man connected with the British propaganda services, was that the text in each case had to be approved by the cabinet, whereas the German psychological experts had a free hand and could utilize any form of appeal which seemed most likely to be effective. Consequently the Germans went in more for pictures and symbols than for rational argumentation. One Nazi propaganda tract which I saw at the front was a series of crude images rather like the comic strips in our papers, showing a Tommy and a poilu about to dive into a swimming-pool labeled 'blood bath.' The poilu of course dives in, but at the last moment the Tommy, smoking his pipe, walks off.

Another German propaganda tract was shaped like a leaf and said, 'Next spring when the offensive comes you will fall as the autumn leaves are falling now, and for what?' Another one which I did not see, but which friends told me had dropped in the Parisian region late in February, had the shape of a coffin and simply said, 'Frenchmen, prepare your coffins.'

So much for the strategy of the war of nerves, which still remains the principal form of this war. I have dealt only indirectly with the propaganda efforts of the various belligerents in neutral countries because, contrary to the widespread belief in America, I am convinced that it is only an incidental aspect of the war. The modern conception of war propaganda is almost exclusively offensive. European propagandists have perhaps an exaggerated idea of their ability to undermine the enemy, but they have no confidence at all in their ability to win allies by the same method.

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Since the war started there has been only one serious effort to involve the United States in it — this was the meeting of the League of Nations in Geneva in response to the Finnish appeal against the Soviet aggression. There is no doubt that this whole performance was staged solely for the purpose of influencing public opinion in the neutral countries, particularly the United States, and the French and British by coming out as champions of Finland naturally were the principal beneficiaries.

It was not, however, a French or British idea to revive the moribund League for this purpose. It was an American idea. Considerable pressure was exerted from the United States to make the French and British Governments consent to this procedure, which they were reluctant to do because at that moment they had not yet made up their minds to treat Russia as an enemy, and still hoped some day to separate Stalin from Hitler.

Even today there are still conservative elements in France and England who disapprove of the anti-Russian policy which has now become official, and reproach the United States, in accents familiar to readers of our isolationist press, for trying to drag the European democracies into an additional war which America herself was not prepared to fight.

Just who the Americans were who persuaded the French and British to play the Finnish card at Geneva cannot be definitely ascertained. I have heard both British and French sources throw the blame on Bullitt, but then Bullitt is blamed for a great many things and there is no proof that he played the leading rôle in this affair.

As far as I could gather in Europe from reading the American papers and listening to the American radio, the Germans were

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taking the offensive in the invisible war in America as everywhere else, and the propaganda strategy of the Allies was purely defensive. Obviously the Nazis had a great advantage in the United States, for their objective was simply to paralyze any effective intervention in the war on the side of the Allies. In general it is always easier to tear down than to build. In this age of skepticism, despair, and moral disarray, especially in the United States, where the people are still suffering a moral hang-over from the propaganda excesses of the last war, it is a tremendous task, almost an impossible task, to lead public opinion in the direction of any effective action. It is, on the contrary, tragically easy to sow doubt and dissension, to stifle any enthusiasm and destroy any political ideal.

That is all that Nazi strategy requires of German agents in America, and that is what they are doing very effectively so far as I can judge. They are aided by the same kind of unconscious allies who helped Hitler to win his 'moral Caporetto' over France during the Czech crisis. In saying this I do not mean that all American isolationists are accomplices, unconscious or otherwise, of German propaganda. There is a reasonable case for isolation, just as there is a reasonable case for intervention or any other consistent foreign policy. The evil arises from the fact that a great many American isolationists, particularly certain lords of the press, do not content themselves with making a reasonable case for isolation, but go in for what amounts to moral sabotage. Their reasoning seems to be that the danger of America's being dragged into the war lies in the natural sympathies of the American people with the European democracies, and that, since these sympathies have an ideological or even a moral basis, the surest way to avert the danger is to destroy the moral basis.

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Thus one powerful isolationist newspaper consistently refers to the French and British as the 'empires,' not the 'democracies.'

Perhaps I am biased, but it seems to me that the long-term effects of this propaganda of moral sabotage are much more dangerous than even the most hysterical interventionist propaganda. Abuse of propaganda, particularly atrocity stories, by Allied politicians and by hysterical interventionists in the United States during the last war helped to produce a generation of moral anarchists. The excess of 'debunking' propaganda by Nazi and Communist agents and by American isolationists is very likely, I am afraid, to produce a generation of homicidal fanatics.

# X

## ANASTASIE THE FAIR

CENSORSHIP is the negative phase of propaganda and the principal weapon of defense in psychological warfare. The operations of an official censorship are therefore extremely interesting to anyone attempting to cover the invisible front; through them you can see where the shells are landing.

In France censorship, popularly called 'Anastasie,' was made obligatory for all forms of expression by governmental decree a few days before the outbreak of war. In England the censorship, as far as the domestic press was concerned, was officially described as voluntary, though all the news and opinion published was in fact submitted to official control. The English theory of censorship, modeled on the German and Italian systems, was to censor news at the source as much as possible and make editors their own censors, naturally under supervision from on high. The German and Italian censorships, as far as their domestic press was concerned, were not altered by the war, except that in Germany the military gained a certain ascendancy over the political censors. In order to safeguard their neutrality and also

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their military secrets, the small neutral countries of Europe set up censorships of varying degrees of severity over the domestic and foreign press. Thus the freedom of the press, in so far as it had existed before, disappeared from Europe with the advent of war, and the political thinking of peoples was, when not directed by their leaders, at least contained within officially prescribed limits.

In France the censorship functioned openly, frankly, and brutally, with equal severity for the foreign and domestic press. All copy intended for publication at home or abroad had to be previously submitted to a special commission installed at the Hotel Continental under the theoretical control of Jean Giraudoux. Representatives of the armed forces, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other departments of the Government had each a right of veto, and could wield the shears or the blue pencil freely on any statements or thoughts of which they disapproved. Partly for technical reasons, partly as a protest against the censorship, the French papers submitted only the proofs of copy already set up in type, and any cuts made by the censors appeared as gaping white spaces in the text of the published newspaper. Truculent polemicists like Charles Maurras frequently presented their readers with nothing more substantial than a signature at the bottom of a column or two of empty newsprint. Some papers coyly inserted in the blank spaces caricatures of Anastasie, pictured as a long-nosed spinster.

In the early days of the war the stupidity inherent in any official censorship and the confusion inevitable in the operation of an unfamiliar institution under wartime conditions produced so many fantastic or picturesque incidents that Anastasie's more serious side attracted little attention. Exchanging anec-

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dotes about the misdeeds of the censorship was long the favorite occupation of French and foreign newspapermen in Paris.

My favorite one concerns a British colleague who in the early days of the war had got into the habit of taking his telegrams to the autonomous military censorship installed in the telegraph office of the Rue de Grenelle. He found it less severe than the principal censorship bureau at the Hotel Continental. One night, however, the first half of a long message was entirely suppressed. He protested and an amiable young lieutenant agreed with him that the copy was not really so dreadful as all that.

'If I could use my own judgment,' said the lieutenant, 'I would let it pass, but unfortunately I have my orders. Since it is a borderline case, why don't you take it to the Continental? Maybe they will pass it.'

My friend took his telegram to the Continental censors and they did pass the first part of his message.

But they suppressed the second part!

Then there is the story about the woman fashion writer whose copy came back from the censors with no erasures, but with all the split infinitives corrected.

According to a Fleet Street anecdote, possibly apocryphal, the British Ministry of Information refused to hand over to a newspaper requested copies of the propaganda tracts distributed in Germany, on the ground that they might fall into enemy hands!

Such anecdotes about the Allied censorships and propaganda services could be stretched out indefinitely, but there are more important, if less picturesque, stories. The incident mentioned in my diary for August 31, the cutting-out of the words 'Polish Corridor' and the substitution of 'Polish Pomerania,' is a good



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example of one of the more important aspects of censorship in this war. Though no explanation was given me, the reason was obvious. 'Polish Pomerania' was one of Poland's propaganda slogans. It illustrated the official Polish thesis that the region in question was part of an ancient Polish province, not just a 'corridor' arbitrarily cut through German territory to give Poland an outlet to the sea. American newspaper readers, rightly or wrongly, always thought of it as the Polish Corridor, but the French censors, in the interests of the Polish ally, were going to change all that.

The very triviality of this example is significant, showing that on the eve of war words and ideas, like men, were being mobilized and put into uniform to fight for the fatherland. The most casual phrase, like the most obscure peasant, was expected to do his bit, and the censor's blue pencil, like the gendarme's rifle, was ready to deal with slackers. I was a neutral, but this modest little phrase of mine, without my leave, was forcibly enlisted in the legions of Allied propaganda, or, as the censor would have put it, eliminated as a prisoner of war from the legions of German propaganda.

Allied propaganda, as I said in the last chapter, seemed to me to be largely on the defensive in America, but that does not mean that the Allied Governments were willing to trust American newspaper correspondents abroad to give the American people the picture of the war which the correspondents believed to be the correct one. The correspondents were allowed or helped to draw their little word pictures from the authentic facts — the Allied propaganda services did not go in for downright faking. Then the censorship, functioning like a filtering lens, eliminated everything which was considered unfavorable from the point of

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view of Allied propaganda. The final result might be and frequently was almost as misleading as a downright fake, though competition with the German and neutral versions of the war held the margin of distortion fairly low, much lower than in the last war when the British had a virtual monopoly of cable news and radio had not yet been developed.

Believers in democracy and supporters of the Allied cause should not let themselves be saddened, much less get indignant, over this casual exposé of Allied censorship. Governments, democratic or otherwise, are interested in governing; they are not interested in the truth except when it serves their interests. The advantage of a democracy is that it permits a certain amount of the truth to be told despite the efforts of governments to prevent it. And democracy, notoriously, has to be suspended in time of war.

Actually, very few people care for the truth as such, and I do not think that the writer or most of his readers are entitled to cast the first stone, even at a wartime censor or propagandist. Indignation should be saved for cases of cruelty, but criticism, without indignation, should not be spared in war or peace, for any cause, no matter how holy or important, against the lack of imagination, courage, and patience which causes officials in every régime to think that a lie or a concealment is a necessary evil, if not a convenient short cut.

On the score of imagination and courage — but certainly not on the score of love of truth — the Germans have to be given a good mark for the liberalism of their wartime censorship on foreign correspondents, at least American correspondents. I have seen copies of dispatches from American correspondents in Berlin which would have caused the immediate expulsion of

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any correspondent who handed in a similar dispatch to the French censors.

I have seen liberals get very troubled over this paradoxical situation, but to me it seems very simple and not at all troubling.

There are two different sets of reasons why the Germans have been more liberal with the foreign press than the French, or even British. One is psychological. Propaganda and censorship in Germany are in the hands of men who are scientifically trained for their work. In France and England they are in the hands of men who are not scientifically trained and who themselves do not understand the higher strategy of their function.

This brings us to the second reason. The strategy back of the German press censorship is to cultivate in the neutral countries the impression of German might. Everything else is sacrificed to that. By letting foreign correspondents express themselves frankly, which includes revealing a number of disagreeable things, the Nazi authorities have made Berlin the most interesting European capital as a news source. Censorship dulls the interest of copy from Paris and London. Consequently German news gets the best play in the American papers, and the reader gets the impression that Germany dominates the European scene because the Berlin date line dominates his front page.

In London and Paris the propaganda authorities are equally interested in stressing Allied might, but cannot bring themselves to make the necessary sacrifices. They are too afraid of indiscretion, of criticism, of unkind words. In the war of nerves they lack confidence and do not feel themselves a match for the adversary. The same timorousness which keeps them from making propaganda on a big scale and directly in America keeps them from being liberal on a big scale with American correspondents

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abroad. Hence the indirect, negative, and hypocritical method of making propaganda through censorship.

Even about this kind of Allied propaganda it seems to me that there is a great deal of misunderstanding in America. It is just as naïve to suppose that Allied propagandists are exclusively concerned with trying to drag the United States into the war as to suppose that they are interested in the naked truth as such.

They are primarily concerned with fighting the enemy through America, making their paper bullets ricochet off the American papers and hit him. This is illustrated by the following personal anecdote:

The day that the Red Army moved into Poland, suggesting that there might be a real military alliance between the Nazis and the Bolsheviks, I got some very gloomy comment in Paris from well-informed Frenchmen who considered such an alliance a terrible setback to their hopes of victory. I tried to cable these comments to America, but the censors disapproved.

'Don't you realize,' I asked them, 'that the best possible Allied propaganda in America is to give the impression that you can't win this war unless you get help?'

'No doubt,' a polite young officer answered, 'but it is the worst possible propaganda in Germany.'

In other words, keeping out of the American papers a pessimistic dispatch from France which might have been cabled back to the German newspapers was more important than trying to win American support. This was probably the most consistent preoccupation of the French censors.

Another preoccupation was not to hurt the feelings of neutral governments. For several months it was almost impossible to

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get anything about Italy or Mussolini past the French censors. The news might come from diplomatic sources or even from outside France, but it made no difference; the official theory was that the stamp of the censorship without which no copy could be filed involved the responsibility of the French Government. Everything depended, therefore, on the relations prevailing at that moment between the French Government and the foreign government under discussion. Later on in the winter, when Mussolini began getting obstreperous and the British decided to put pressure on him, the ban on press dispatches likely to displease the Duce was lifted.

Similarly, in the first months of the war, before the policy toward Russia had been fixed, even the blackest Soviet crimes could not be denounced too categorically by French or foreign journalists. One day, waiting in the censors' anteroom, I saw some copy written by Madame Geneviève Tabouis for American papers come back with a thick blue streak, inadequately concealing the adjective 'abominable' between the words 'Stalin's' and 'policy.'

The day of the Soviet attack on Finland I sent a short comment from an anonymous French friend to the effect that the Allies owed it to world opinion to take the lead, not in sanctions against Russia, but in consultations with the neutrals to see what could be done. It was radically suppressed with the explanation, 'Just janitors' gossip.'

The next week M. Paul-Boncour was at Geneva calling world opinion to the aid of bleeding Finland.

This sort of thing induces a certain skepticism in newspaper correspondents and demoralizes earnest liberals. There is no reason why it should. It seems to me that the world-saver who

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turns cynic is the victim of an optical illusion. He assumes that pure causes must have pure motives; any impurity or any hint even of human weakness annihilates his crusading spirit. In political affairs the only way to avoid being either a sucker or a cynic is not to look at the motives which determine policy but at the consequences which a given policy is likely to have. If the consequences, according to the observer's personal criterion, are good, then the policy is good and should be supported, regardless of the motives behind it. It is unfortunately very difficult to be consistent in following this philosophy; I have not always been myself.

The operations of the French censorship involved another very interesting point of political philosophy. As far as the domestic press was concerned, one of the dominant préoccupations of the censorship was to foil the efforts of German propaganda to divide the Allies and divide the French people among themselves. Any fact or comment judged offensive as regards the English ally was of course ruthlessly suppressed. The soft pedal was applied to editorial comments on internal politics, even when the Government of the moment was nowise involved. A certain amount of mild and retrospective bickering between parties was tolerated, but harsh words were not. This produced effects like: 'That old — Charles Maurras pretends . . .' or 'The — Léon Blum whose — policies are responsible for — now maintains. . .'

The censors did not content themselves with deleting uncomplimentary epithets. Sometimes they even ordered changes in the size of type and the manner in which news was displayed. That the French people should have no pretext for quarreling among themselves or with the British, any really concrete discussion of war aims was suppressed.

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This political censorship finally raised such a storm of protest that in February Premier Daladier, with evident misgivings, agreed, 'as an experiment,' to suppress it.

Though it is journalistic treason to say so, the truth is that the political censorship was indispensable in France at the beginning of the war and would have done a lot of good if it had existed earlier, especially at the time of Munich.

Yet how can a censorship of pure opinion be reconciled with the basic principles of democracy? Obviously it cannot, but in moments of crisis democracy may perish through political quarrels, utilized by enemies within and without. In other words, how can men be made to work together without thinking alike? That seems to me the fundamental problem of every democracy in war or peace, and as far as I know no one has yet produced a logical or ideologically defensible solution to the dilemma.

# XI

## THE WAR OF REASON

WHAT do Europeans really think about the war in Europe?

What are they fighting for?

How long can they keep it up?

Judging from letters I get from home and from the American periodicals I see, these are the questions which every American has in his mind about Europe. They are also the questions which Europeans have in mind about other Europeans. The French wonder anxiously what their British allies really think in their hearts, and the British wonder what the French think. Ordinary men and women in both Allied countries pounce eagerly on every scrap of news or report, however dubious, which might give some clue as to what the enemy is thinking. No doubt ordinary men and women in Germany are doing the same.

Back of these questions there is a certain naive skepticism. The questioners take it for granted that in time of war what the people think is necessarily something different from the thoughts which their leaders and their official organs of expression voice for them. Sometimes this is true; sometimes it is not. In any



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event it is not very difficult for a trained observer on the spot to discover the true feelings which lie beneath façades of propaganda and smoke screens of censorship. If that were the only difficulty it would be easy to answer the fundamental questions, for as I write this chapter this strange war is now in its seventh month, the sediments of chaos and panic which clouded its opening have largely settled, and it should be possible to see clearly.

I do in fact see a great many things more clearly than when I started this book, but it is still impossible to find any neat, concise, comprehensive formulas to describe what is going on in the belligerent mind of Europe. Let us start with something fundamental, the most fundamental thing of all: the threat to individual life which the state of war involves for every human being living in the belligerent countries.

To any Frenchman, Englishman, or German the most important thing about the war is itself a question: whether or not it is going to kill him. The fact that he may be willing to lay down his life if that should be necessary does not diminish the importance of the question. He always hopes that it will not be necessary, or, more accurately, that the lightning will strike somewhere else. He knows he is gambling for high stakes, but, when he is brave, he has a gambler's confidence that somehow he will beat the game.

It is platitudinous to say that the instinct of self-preservation is one of the strongest if not the strongest of human motives, but many people do not realize that it should be equally platitudinous to say that the most potent political ideal of the individual is to keep alive as long as possible. Platitudinous or not, I believe this to be true, and that is one of the reasons why I think that, given our modern feeling about the importance of individual life, any war is a neurotic conflict in the minds of the men who are

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fighting it; that is, a clash between contradictory and not wholly conscious instincts.

There would be no point to going into these abstractions if the present war in Europe were like other wars, but so far it has been unlike any other in that it is the most horrible in imagination and the most benign in reality that man has ever known. The result is that individuals in belligerent countries, both soldiers and civilians, are less concerned with the war as a political reality than with the potentialities of death lurking behind it. There is no general revolt against the infamy of war, as many pacifists in neutral countries wishfully think, because, though it is getting more and more uncomfortable, it has not yet become infamous, that is to say, deadly. Conversely, Europe is not happily resigned to the war, because, in addition to the fact that it is so uncomfortable, those potentialities of death are still quick in it.

Europe is living dangerously and meagerly, but not yet tragically. In reality the war as a traditional pattern in our imaginations has still not begun and only one thing has really changed: the French and British people have learned that taking up arms does not necessarily mean dying, and the German people have learned that taking up arms does not necessarily mean victory. A man with arms and regimented under orders thinks differently from a free civilian about political questions but he thinks the same about questions of life and death.

Therefore, whether at the front or behind the lines, the second question which Europeans ask themselves is: When is the war going to end? or, maybe: Are we going to win? But the first question is: When is the war (meaning land offensives for the soldiers, bombardments of towns for civilians) going to begin?

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Speculation about the date of the real war follows the same lines as during the summer of 1939, before there was any war at all. Some people believe there will never be any real war, just as they believed in the summer that Hitler would back down at the last moment. Others think real war — 'total war,' we call it now — is inevitable and they advance different dates, again as during the summer. In general there are two contradictory attitudes, just as there were before the war began: the belief that it is all a mirage, that it will blow over somehow; and the more diffuse feeling of impending doom which has been hanging over Europe for the past few years.

The following excerpt from my diary of September 24, 1939, deals with the first of these attitudes:

'In the past few weeks we have witnessed a curious evolution of the idea that it is all going to blow over somehow. Early in July my friend Cros summed up a widespread sentiment when he said to me, "I understand there will be a general mobilization, followed by a backdown." Two or three days before war broke out, another well-informed friend quoted his usual source at the Quai d'Orsay as declaring, "Even after the first shots have been fired in the east, it will be possible to save peace."

'Now that the war has started, some people seem to have the idea that the real hostilities may never get under way and that after a winter under arms peace negotiations will start — if not sooner. Mussolini's speech last night seemed aimed at this section of the public. I don't quite know how to interpret the persistence of this feeling of skepticism about the war. Psychologically it might be explained as an attempt to "annul" the reality of the international situation and, since in many cases the theory is advanced by people who pretend to be indignant

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about it, can be taken as a symptom of unconscious defeatism. The fact that there has been no real fighting on the Western Front and the German efforts to mollify France obviously encourage it.<sup>4</sup>

Many times during the following months I was struck by the same phenomenon. In December, for instance, an intelligent and particularly well-informed English journalist with the British army in France remarked to me: 'You watch; this is all going to end in another Munich.' Later on I heard other Britishers and occasionally Frenchmen express the same opinion.

The opposite view was heard just as often. All during the fall months there was speculation as to whether the German offensive would come before winter or whether it would be deferred until spring. With appropriate strategical trimmings the same argument that had cropped up so often in the early summer of 1939 was brought out again: If Hitler does not attack now he will not attack at all, because in a few months we shall be too strong. Therefore he will attack now.

The calendar was again pressed into service to support the argument of an imminent offensive. When February came around, amateur and professional strategists took care to remind the public that the battle of Verdun had started in February. When February became March, it was remembered that March is Hitler's favorite month for sudden strokes.

As I am writing this, people in Paris are still speculating as to whether 'total war' will start March 15, April 1, or not until 1941, while others maintain that there will be no total war.

Partly, this curious psychological phenomenon is the consequence of the divided feelings of the average European about the war. Partly, it is the consequence of deliberate propaganda.

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Skepticism about the war unquestionably originates from Germany or from defeatist elements in the Allied countries. Well-disposed neutrals in Germany or in the neutral countries bordering Germany are confidentially informed by Nazi propaganda agents that the Allies cannot attack Germany, that Hitler has no intention of throwing his troops against the Maginot Line, and consequently that the war will end by a negotiated peace along Munich lines. This does not prevent other German propagandists, notably the principal Nazi leaders in their speeches, from howling bloodthirsty threats and announcing periodically that total war is about to begin.

What confuses the issue is that the Allied press and statesmen concur with the Germans in periodically proclaiming the imminence of total war. The reason for this is that the Allied leaders are afraid that their peoples will get soft through inaction and hope to maintain the war spirit by continually crying wolf. To my mind this is a grave error in psychological strategy. It gives the impression that Hitler is the master of Europe's destinies and keeps men in suspense awaiting his decisions.

On the other hand, though anxiety remains, panic has disappeared in the Allied countries. Total war is not the nightmare that it was, and Parisians have become so callous to the menace of air bombardments that it is a serious problem to get them into the shelters when the sirens go off. When German scouting planes flew over Paris one starry night toward the end of February, men, women, and children rushed into the streets to see the anti-aircraft shells exploding and the searchlights playing in the sky, and several were wounded by falling debris or unexploded shells.

This is a far cry from the hysterical nights in September during

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the first air raids. (The panic was particularly serious in the south, where there was the least reason for it. Automobilists in villages around Nîmes were stoned for showing too much light, and a friend of mine told me once when he lighted a cigarette in the street an old peasant in garlic-laden accents said to him, 'What if a bomber saw you?')

The more virile spirit has filtered back from the front throughout France. It is not based on indifference to death, but on a more confident attitude toward fate, even in time of war. Going to war, the people have learned, is not synonymous with going to the slaughterhouse. Admittedly it is the lesson of a war which is not a real war, but doubts on this point are quieted by reading the dispatches from Finland. There is real war in Finland, and yet the Finns, though fighting against terrific odds, are not being slaughtered like sheep. They are taking heavy losses, but in modern war apparently even a Finn has a chance. The individual Frenchman, soldier or civilian, feels that even if war becomes total he has a chance of getting through with his own particular skin more or less intact, as good a chance as the next man. That is enough to keep up morale in the military sense, more than enough for a race of natural fighters like the French.

Whether this spirit would survive a big-scale offensive against the enemy is hard to say. It would depend probably on the ratio between casualties and gains. Taking ground from the enemy, seeing him run, gives the soldier an illusion of relative safety, as does being under cover, however flimsy. If all superstition were eliminated from the battlefield, war would become impossible.

Except for the hardening of morale, there is very little war spirit in this country or in England, in the sense that there is

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very little hatred of Germany. No organized attempt has been made to whip up hatred as a stimulus to war morale, and it has not developed spontaneously.

One evidence of this is that the French word 'Böche,' which carries with it connotations of intense tribal hatred, has not been revived by the war and seems fallen into disuse. It is still used by newspaper editorials and by army officers of the older generation, but the soldiers at the front prefer the more debonair term 'Fridolin' to describe the enemy, and it is taking on amongst civilians.

The men at the front, like the rest of the population, have no real hatred of the enemy, but daily contact with him has developed a sort of mechanical hostility which raises a wall against all German attempts to fraternize.

In Germany the official propaganda also has been turned on full blast to stir up hatred, not against France so much, but against England. As far as one can judge on the basis of trustworthy reports, this propaganda has not had much effect so far on the masses. Neither in Germany nor in the Allied countries is there any deep and bitter hatred of the enemy. This seems another strange aspect of the war, but it is very natural. Hatred is nearly always nourished by fear, and the average citizen, even the average soldier in the belligerent countries, is not afraid because so far there has been little real fighting.

A French friend of mine who is a particularly acute observer, returning from a long stay in the provinces, said to me:

'In my part of the country up to the present nobody hates the Germans, but the day the first bombs fall, the day that the big offensive starts, there will be an explosion of hatred which will seem absolutely terrifying. If this happens we shall see a war of

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extermination which will make the last war look like a school-room quarrel.'

This is a purely subjective impression, but I should not be surprised if there is a great deal of truth in it.

Already there are some ominous foretastes of what total war will bring. Most of the German prisoners taken at the front behave as you would expect them to behave; that is to say, they seem on the whole relieved to be out of the war, but there are sometimes singular exceptions. A friend of mine who visited a hospital back of the front told me about a wounded German prisoner he had seen. The German was in a room by himself, sitting up in bed, his arms folded, eyes strained straight ahead, glaring like an owl's.

'That is how he is all the time,' one of the doctors told my friend. 'He has been here for several weeks now. He has not said one word, and though one of his arms is broken he will not let anyone touch him or do anything for him at all.'

Then there is the case of the German flier who bailed out of his burning plane and got hung on a tree as he was parachuting down. When some French soldiers ran up to extract him, he drew his revolver and began shooting at them. Thinking he was merely frightened, the soldiers went off and brought back an officer who could speak German. The officer approached the tree and shouted to the flier that he had nothing to be afraid of, he would be treated as a prisoner of war, and the soldiers were merely trying to help him get down from the tree. The German's only answer was to reload his revolver. When the French moved forward again, he began shooting, taking deliberate aim, and succeeded in wounding one soldier. In the end they did the only thing they could do: retired out of pistol range and



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shot at him with their carbines until the gun dropped from his hand.

These are extreme cases, but though rare there are too many of them to be dismissed as individual aberrations. Rather, they are samples of a new kind of humanity which the Nazis are beginning to develop in Germany. Dealing with this race of young Germans who have been conditioned out of old humanity is one of the grave problems of the war. (A negotiated peace, or even a military victory, which leaves thousands of men, like the prisoner in the hospital or the aviator on the tree, free to continue the only kind of existence that they know, is not likely to make for tranquillity in Europe.

Just as there is very little hatred of the enemy, so there is very little enthusiasm for the war. Everyone reads the war communiqués morning and night, but they are read, it seems to me, with less interest by the French and British newspaper readers than the communiqués of the Spanish civil war we read when outside of Spain.

One night in a large Paris café the orchestra, in an unexpected burst of patriotism, began playing the *Marseillaise* and 'God Save the King.' The clients of the café looked blank for a moment, then slowly rose to their feet. A young Frenchman sitting a few tables away remained sitting. When the music was finished, an elderly man in uniform walked over to him and asked him why he did not get up. He replied that he did not feel like it and besides he thought it was silly. A small crowd collected round the table and there were a few minutes of tame argument, nothing like the healthy brawls which Parisians habitually work up when one motorist gets his fender dented by another. The most scalding remark which the leader of the patriots hurled at the

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conscientious objector was to say, with a pitying air, 'Young, but tired!' Having delivered himself of this he walked off and the incident was closed.

As the war drive is on, with hardships of every kind naturally increasing — the suppression of *aperitifs* three times a week is enough to make the war look pretty grim to a Frenchman — and no military activity to keep people keyed up, there is naturally a certain recrudescence of defeatist sentiment. A small minority of the population in France has been frankly defeatist since the beginning of the war. Toward the end of September a group of prominent French pacifists got out a tract entitled 'Immediate Peace.' This tract, which expresses the ideology of the absolute pacifist as applied to the present conflict, reads as follows:

Despite all the efforts of the sincere pacifist, blood is being shed. Already most of Europe is at war. The whole world is going down in a sea of blood;

Everyone knows it, everyone feels it.

The deep sadness of the mobilized soldiers themselves and the pathetic anxiety of their families are proof of this.

There are no flowers in the muzzles of rifles, no heroic songs, no cheering, at the departure of the soldiers. And from what we hear it is the same in all the belligerent countries. From the first day the war is condemned by most of the men at the front or in the rear.

Then let us make peace quickly; let us not wait for it to be offered us by the men responsible for the war.

The cost of peace will never be as ruinous as the cost of war, for nothing can be constructed out of death, while everything can be hoped for from life.

Heeding the voice of reason, the army should lay down their arms.

May the heart of men find solace in the rapid termination of the war.

Call for peace. Demand peace.

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This tract was signed by the following persons, many of whom are well known in French intellectual life:

Alain, Victor Margueritte, Marcel Déat, Germaine Decaris, Félicien Challaye, Vigne, Georges Dumoulin, Georges Pioch, Lucien-Jacques, Thyde Monnier, Giroux, Lecoïn, Charlotte Bonnin, Yvonne and Roger Hagnauer, Vives, Marie Lenglois, Robert Tourly, René Gerin, Maurice Wullens, Henri Poulaille, Marceau Pivert, Zoretti, Georges Yvetot, Jeanne and Michel Alexandre, Robert Louzon, Hélène Laguerre, Emery, Henri Jeanson, Jean Giono.

The tract was suppressed by the police and several of the authors were arrested, and are still in jail. They were spokesmen for a very small group. Naturally their ideas have not changed in the last six months.

Some of my friends, however, who did not share their ideas at the beginning of the war, seem to be swinging toward them now. Their point of view is less unrealistic than that of the extreme pacifists, and it is perhaps unfair to describe them as defeatists. They profess to be opposed to anything resembling a capitulation before Hitler, but pin their hopes on a negotiated peace.

Their argument — and it is difficult to answer if you accept their premise — is that real victory, that is to say destruction of the Nazi régime in Germany, cannot be achieved without sacrificing the lives of several million men, and that this is too high a price to pay for it.

They do not want the Allies to lay down their arms unilaterally, but they want them to open negotiations to settle the war by some kind of compromise while still under arms. When you ask them what kind of compromise they have in mind, they become extremely vague. The truth is that they do not see any more

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clearly how peace can be achieved than they see how victory can be won.

The principal exponents of this school of thought whom I have encountered in France are intellectuals with Left-wing sympathies. They naturally have a certain following among the workers who are consistently subjected to an intense campaign of openly defeatist propaganda by Communist agents.

The dream of a negotiated peace is shared both in England and France by certain business men and politicians. Sumner Welles's European trip gave these people something to get their teeth into and has perhaps aroused dangerous hopes.

In France people do not dare talk too openly about peace. In England I do not think the movement is any stronger, but during a short trip to London in the month of February I was startled to hear several prominent Englishmen say quite frankly that they considered a clean Allied victory out of the question and that the war could only end by a negotiated peace. These were not Left-wing intellectuals, but conservative business men with many political contacts, the same elements essentially who made Munich. Like my Left-wing friends in France, however, they do not seem to have any clear idea of a possible basis for any negotiation. So far as I could judge they seemed to pin their hopes, such as they were, on a split between Hitler and Goering, that is to say on a palace revolution in Germany. Apparently men believed to be intermediaries for Goering had worked hard to get this idea credited.

What the mass of the people in France and England really think is very hard to say. Everyone obviously loathes the war and would like to see peace, but I think that at least in France

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the feeling is still dominant that any peace negotiated with Hitler cannot be a real peace. Thanks to the wartime dictatorships, I do not see any possibility of the Governments' hands being forced by an organized defeatist movement. If a free vote could be taken, I think that the majority of the French people would still support the official thesis that the war must go on till victory. I think that the minority vote would be considerably larger than the Governments care to admit, but even if that minority finally becomes a majority, it does not mean necessarily that Hitler will get the peace he needs so badly. As long as the morale at the front is good, as long as the men who are in power are determined to prosecute the war, the war will go on.

The danger, or hope — according to the point of view — does not lie, as it did before Munich, in a movement of revolt against the governmental position, not even in division of opinion between groups of citizens, but in the irresolution begot by the division within the minds of the men who think that the war must go on, but do not, it seems to me, think so passionately enough.

The following excerpts from my wife's diary and from mine show the emotional evolution away from panic, and also away from enthusiasm, which has occurred since the outbreak of war:

*September 8*

'Today we have been at war exactly a week. Our life has been thrown into such a whirlwind of confusion that I found neither the time nor the energy to keep up this diary.

'One thing I am not likely to forget. On the night of the fourth

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to the fifth we had our first air-raid alarm. We were spending the night in Saint-Cloud, having finished work too late to drive out to Louvecienne. Genia and Molly were spending the night with us. At exactly ten minutes to four I sat up in bed, wide awake, thinking: "*Now.*" The howl of the sirens was yet only a dim wailing in the distant town, and before it had swollen to that knee-weakening, supernatural bark I was out of bed, dressing, waking Genia and Molly, collecting flashlight and gas mask, helping Ed to shut off the gas, hearing my voice talking weirdly, like sleep-talking. Molly was trying on shoes, complaining, and Genia made a wild dash for the john. Running down the stairs on rubber soles, feeling very light and fleet-footed, not caring about the sirens now.

'Downstairs a small, confused group of people, flashlight shadows dancing, were trying to squeeze into a cubbyhole under the staircase. We swept past them, whirling them after us, and ran out into the park. By now the sky was filled with interstellar sobbing, the whole empty, cold space vibrating, the breath of the sirens penetrating into our lungs as we ran. All around the building stood like a moonlit cliff, all its windows blind. The door of the wing we were heading for was locked, and we shook it, roaring suddenly in panic. Finally we were let in, and there the adventure lost its neo-infernal, Wells-like tinge, and we spent the next three hours in horrible boredom, alternately sitting on the dusty waterpipes and taking a stroll into the streets to see what was happening. Nothing happened, not a shot was fired, only occasionally did the drone of a plane chase everyone back into the cellar. About fifty people were assembled in it now, mostly workers' families from down by the Seine. There were two pale little girls wrapped in rugs, bare feet dangling sleepily.

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A little boy played ball on the dusty floor. The women sat around the walls, talking quietly. The atmosphere was that of a waiting-room in a suburban station.

'At first there was much nervous speculation about gas, and we all rushed around dipping blankets in water and putting them against the door, while those who had no gas masks tremulously pressed damp handkerchiefs to their mouths. Long before the *alerte* was over, one after the other sneaked away; some went back to bed, one man went off to fetch shoes for the barefooted little girls, and the concierge, who had been waiting for two hours, "*Mince, faudra aller au travail sans avoir dormi,*" finally at half-past six declared it was now time to go to work and departed for his factory. I went to sleep for a while on the pipes, and Molly slept face downward on the hall carpet. At 7.15, by broad daylight now, the siren sounded again, and the sinister sound made us all hesitate once more, wondering if this was the end or the beginning of a new alarm. Of course no one knew what the signal was to be, and there was much speculating in the hall about it until we finally went home to tea and toast, feeling fine like after a long night in Montmartre, or some such feat.

'That had been the fourth of September. On that day François left, and I spent agonizing minutes at the Gare de Lyon waiting to take Madame Long and Molly back home, panic around the corner — because a railway station always induces a sort of madness in me — and a blacked-out wartime station, with soldiers going off, women crying, and cops watching me suspiciously all the time, and Molly and Mrs. Long never turning up, never a known face in the stream of faces going by, and the terror, of being in a bad part of town, a hostile, unknown part of town, where an air raid would send you scuttling with thousands of

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others in search of a problematic *abri*, and maybe collective death as an anonymous fragment of this anonymous, passing crowd, not even Parisians, but strangers to these parts, people leaving or arriving.\*

'Later I picked up two little boys with an enormous valise and offered to drive them home, but got so lost in the utter darkness that I had to crawl back to the station and ask a cop, feeling like a stray child myself, and then take the kids to a *métro*, feeling terribly ashamed and foolish.

'Next day, the fifth, the Parisians had tired faces, and drank a great deal of beer and *vermouth à l'eau*, because their throats were parched, and thousands of cars streamed out of town, all those whom the alarm had finally rattled out of their confidence. Every shopkeeper was now putting up planks in front of the glass windows, or pasting strips of paper over them. The self-respecting shops made nice geometric patterns; the others just hastily slammed the stuff on and banged the iron railings of the doorway to, in their haste to leave. All those that had gas masks now carried them, and those that had none looked disdainful, or more frequently very dejected. There were more gas masks stolen on that day than all other things put together.

'That night there was again an alarm. Genia, Molly, and I were at Louvecienne and Ed at La Malmaison. This time I stayed in bed, listening to the noise slowly creeping up on us, until last of all the sirens of Versailles and Saint-Germain joined in, shrieking hysterically like dogs at the moon, over the silent countryside. I lay in bed, shaking like a leaf, until the brass of the bedstead jangled. In about forty minutes I heard distant explosions, and winced, feeling how the bombs were falling on Paris. Actually they did not, and what I heard were anti-air-



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craft guns. This *alerte* lasted two hours, and I spent them awake, with my insides shrunk like an old woolen sock.

'Next morning, the sixth, I went over to La Malmaison, where I found Ed sleeping on paper-covered mattresses in a fake Gothic room reeking of camphor. This château, Vert-Mont, is now the headquarters of the Agence Radio, and we have a room in it, and will inhabit it every second night. On the nights Maurice will sleep there we shall be in the Hotel Continental in Paris. A terrible problem of toothbrushes.

'The park of the château is lovely, with deep green lawns and the slanting shadows of old trees. The château, furnished in an abominable *fin de siècle* luxury, is yet very human; one can imagine someone adoring it, and the absurd furniture in it, because of a happy childhood spent there. There is no running water in the rooms, and the Bathrooms, Japanese in style, are full of unknown and touching gadgets. The whole Agence Radio staff, plus secretaries and stenographers, and several English and American correspondents, are roaming around looking unhappy, because the whole thing is still little more than a camp. It cheers me up no end, and I immediately classify this as a good place. It gives me a feeling of extra-territoriality, like being on the French side of the Bidassoa.

'We have a delightful bucolic lunch in Louvecienne, overlooking an orchard, and afterward I take Molly to Rueil, the car stuffed with mattresses and rugs, in the classical emigrant fashion. Lovely Norman countryside, with rolling hills and architectural clouds. How can anyone gut a single one of those fields with even a single bomb? The fresh countryside belongs to every European. It was an autumn afternoon, with slanting sun on ripening apples, and the war might be left out of the picture, alto-

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gether, except that we carry it around with us in the pit of our stomachs. What importance have the waving shadows on a cornfield now, when I know that on the edges of this country, along such fields, war is festering? Feeling too low to enjoy a ride in the country is my idea of hell.

'That night I spent at La Malmaison, and there was no air raid. Not that it made any difference, because waiting for one is just as bad. We had a black coffee in a *bistrot*, because there were no *croissants* and no milk, and then we drove to Carrière-sous-Bois, with visions of raw *champignons* that did not materialize because the place was closed, so we had lunch in Saint-Germain instead, and a very bad lunch it was. We had dinner at Louis' with Paul Ward and Wave, this being the only restaurant left in town where they don't take the war as an excuse for serving you tired cold fish with *sauce verte*, and throwing you out at nine o'clock. We spent the night at the Continental, and I slept ten hours in spite of Ed typing and rustling papers in the room, and never worried about any air raid. Anyway, there was none.'

September 11

'Paris by night. Real night. Thick, primeval night, of the same density as the night of sleeping villages, or dew-wet fields. Paris cowering, trying to hide in the dark. All those stone buildings wishing they could sink into the earth. The whole town trying to look innocently like a thick forest covering the banks of the Seine. How much safer we would feel if instead of walking along the warm sides of buildings, on the ringing asphalt, we were treading on moss, with dark foliage above us, and no other sound than the startled chirp of a bird! When the bombs finally come, how much better to lie in a grassy ditch! Bombs don't kill frogs,

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or rabbits. They might mistake you for a frog or a rabbit. Bombs go after stone buildings, where they can rip the walls open, and suspend brass beds from tottering rafters. They'll get you, even if they have to nose their way through six floors. They'll come for you in the cellar.'

September 12

'I heard someone say, "*Nous n'avons pas fait la guerre — nous avons glissé dans la guerre.*" And why? Only because it is easier to give up to war than to organize peace. If history books later tell us that France and England heroically waged war against the forces of barbarity, they will lie. Nothing of the kind. We were cornered into war. It was a question of "Fight now, with a chance to win," or "Fight later for a lost cause." At the very best, we fight because after all we still have some spirit left, and because that is better than to lie down and be trodden on. Also most of us hate Naziism. Most of us — no, some of us — fight to purge the world of Hitler. But that is only a negative fight. We fight against something — but what would we do with peace if it were to come now? We have no war aims — no cause. We struggle in the dark. Every one of us has that in him that would gladly die for a better peace. No one asks us to die for a better peace. No one even mentions that better world that should come after the struggle. Before the war came, hundreds were fighting, in and out of Germany, for . . . let us say a world we and our children need not be ashamed of any longer — or to give back its true meaning to the word "man," which has come to mean "sheep," or "vermin," or "corpse."

'People were suffering death, torture, prison, and the contempt of their fellow-beings for this. We had even come to accept the

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destruction of all the symbols, all the outward signs, all the cherished monuments of our civilization, in order to uphold the spirit from which they had sprung. We had, slowly growing up in this armistice Europe, come to recognize that something was more important than bread, or comfort, or peace: life. Not only the life of our limbs, of our bellies, but life for our brains and our heart and our sex, unrestricted, full, unashamed, audacious, ever-growing life. We wanted a world in which every human being would be able to give his best. And the world we were living in only let them give their worst. We wanted to give our best. We still do. But it is not wanted. The war has been taken out of our hands, and given to those to wage who made Versailles, and who, if they are also allowed to make this peace, will leave the world worse off than ever.'

*September 15*

'Tonight I walked home at midnight, down the Rue de la Paix, across the Place Vendôme, and into the Rue de Castiglione. We had had dinner at the Scribe Grill with Sam Brewer, who just came up from Madrid, and he showed us pictures of what a bombardment could do to an eight-story apartment house. We had cocktails and a good dinner, so we did not really mind. Those Madrid apartment houses seemed built pretty flimsily, anyhow. I walked home alone, and all the way down the Rue de la Paix I could hear my footsteps echo loudly along the opposite sidewalk. A little white square on a porte-cochère told me that here was an *abri*, but I was not particularly concerned, because I knew I could run to the Continental in fifteen minutes, even if I had to cross the pool of darkness of the Place Vendôme. Napoleon on his column tonight. Bright stars. I walked right

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across the Place Vendôme, because I had on a white coat, and I figured the autos would be able to see me before they were on me. There were none anyway. Now that Paris has only a few flickering lights on the level of the ground you can at last see how the bulk of a building or the curve of a roof outlines against the sky. And every evening you know exactly how the weather is. Motorists are not allowed to use their headlights on crossings, but they are allowed to use their horns. The inhibitions are too strong, however, and the silence at nights is even worse than the darkness. Cyclists go by whistling eerily, maybe because they feel good having the street to themselves, or maybe because they are scared of the dark.'

„Sunday, September 17

'The Russians have entered Poland. "Fourteenth day of the war against Hitlerism," says the *Daily Express*. It looks more like the fourteenth day of the Thirty Years' War. Now at least we don't have to worry about the meaning of this war . . . we are fighting for our skins. New vistas open up: the war spreading from one country to another; the U.S.A. sure to come in very soon now, and what that is going to mean to Ed and me; Switzerland reduced to the state Poland is in today, with ruins and shell-holes spreading even to the remotest valleys, to the Engadine. Bombs falling in Bevers, maybe. A grotesque thought, but the grotesque has become very probable. We must try to shed now all our loves, all our memories, like old garments. We have already given up our worldly possessions. I went to the flat today and had a bath, and then, while cooling off, went through a mess of papers and letters, filling the waste-paper basket. I stored away the books that were lying around, and the personal trinkets.

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Now all looks tidy and impersonal like a waiting-room. Waiting for whatever may come. A week ago I thought with melancholy of my curtains, and two weeks ago I sent away my silver. What importance have they now? My only regret is for the books. But on the whole, all that is sacrificed easily. Thoughts of a future life in a house of my own, in the country, with children coming in at four o'clock asking for bread and butter, and us being young parents still, are more difficult to blow out. Yet the only thing to do is to face this new kind of thunderstorm naked, like when it is raining and we are out camping. Naked, and with one single thought: win this war and stay alive. Or maybe the staying alive part is also superfluous.

'Today the shadow of those thousands of planes, Russian planes and German planes, has crept up on us again. It produces a funny feeling in the knees. Harold showed me a wire from his wife: "How long this separation?" My first impulse was to tell him, "Pack up and go home, because no war is worth such a separation," only I knew the answer before he gave it, "Don't you know yet that newspapermen are damned fools?" The only solution is for his wife to come and join the picnic. The time is passed when men can expect the women to stay home and bear the anxiety while they bear the danger. It seems to me to be a case of letting the dying patient have the good meal he is asking for, even if it is lobster and sauerkraut, because it can't make him any worse, and I know one case at least where it worked a miracle and the patient recovered.'

*September 19*

'Sitting with Olivier on the terrace of the Deux Magots, in the dusk. Olivier is twenty-three. Ever since he entered school

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he has worked like blazes, as only French kids do; he is an earnest young intellectual and had, when I knew him a year ago, strong Communist leanings and an acute sense of social injustice. He is also a good skier, and a fierce individualist, and very French, in the good sense. He has just come from America. He was disgusted with America. "The front is in New York," he said. "People are hysterical, but they don't know what it is all about, it is like a better baseball match to them. They don't give a rap about the Poles' being massacred. And they think the British sank the *Athenia* to get them into the war. They don't want to go to war, they know that they may, probably will have to, and they are in a blue funk."

"Then we talked about the war. He thought nothing would happen this winter, except a lot of boredom for the armies. "If at least they would put me with peasants! But they will put me with shopkeepers." But with "*les premiers bourgeois*" the massacre will start. "No one will remain out of it. Soldiers and civilians are going to die like flies. Switzerland will be attacked, and reduced to the same plight as Poland. Ten years from now armed bands will still be roaming over the devastated countries, fighting for food. If by any chance we are still alive, we will be broken of spirit, and old, and glad enough to eat *pissenlits* found in the fields. It is the end of European civilization, and America will not be able to survive Europe's decomposition. I don't want to be alive to see it all. I am twenty-three, and have had a pleasant life. I am only sorry I worked so much. *Pour le reste, je m'en fiche.*" "*Tant pis* for civilization," I said. "They can have it. For what it is worth. But there will be some forests left. We can begin anew, from the cave age. We can live away from other men, on a farm in Africa or Canada" — "There will be no forests left"

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— “Oh, come . . .” “And anyway, we will be too broken, too old to start a new life.” Well, that was all pretty gloomy, and looking at the house opposite, with all its shutters closed, and the shop in the basement all barricaded with planks, I could see quite clearly how it would look in ten years’ time, if there was still enough of it to look at. Its windows would be holes through which one would see the sky, and grass would be growing on the *trottoir*, between the cracks, and maybe rats or owls would be the sole inhabitants. We both felt terrible.’

Sunday, January 28, 1940

‘Now that all those damned international crises are over and war has finally started, we enjoy a quieter, more peaceful, and on the whole happier existence than in any of the last few years. There is nothing to bring war home to the civilians, so they go on living as before, and have even stopped being ashamed of it. Otherwise the *boîtes de nuit* which are now open till midnight would not be so full! We’re enjoying a terrifically cold winter, which brings a lot of hardship and a certain satisfaction to the town-dwellers; they think this is a real war winter, and so they feel they are doing their bit by living in often unheated flats, or by waiting for hours in the icy wind for the rare busses, with their feet freezing to the ground. They also do their bit by having to go through all sorts of war ruses: bribery and cheating to get their coffee, oil, and the usual large quantity of meat which every Frenchman consumes, to the great harm of his liver. Further, they congregate to knit and talk about the dear ones in the trenches. They also go to night clubs, where naked girls speckled with tricolor sequins sing “*La Fille de la Madelon*.”

‘These at least are the war occupations of the more visible



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civilians. There are others, of course. Those that have been evacuated from their native villages and transplanted to a foreign climate, while in their native village the soldiers break up their beds for kindling and raid their cellars. Also those women whose sons or husbands are away and who have to live on an *allocation*, or rather starve. Or the women who are out of a job. Or the workers whom we see coming out of the factory, the girls dressed in blue overalls, when we drive into town for a Sunday evening binge. Unfortunately the soldiers who come home for ten days' *permission* only see a lot of lazy bourgeois, who can sleep in beds and occasionally be warm, and a lot of women guzzling chocolates in *pâtisseries*, and a lot of their more fortunate friends who are mobilized in one of the ministries, or in the Censorship. "*Des platqués.*" So that every soldier coming on leave immediately decides that the civilians are swine. Or like the reconnaissance pilot: "I can't bear Paris. I have nothing in common with the civilians any longer. I can't understand them. I'll go and spend my leave skying, alone." Madame Lobstein also says her women friends whose husbands come back on leave all complain about how different, how strange they have become. Naturally, when they left they broke with their past, and ever since they have been living with only men.

'I ran into young R. A. He is twenty-four, from the south, mobilized somewhere near Valence. He belongs to the Mauriac-Maritain school of thought. A Left-wing Catholic, he used to call himself. I suppose he leaves the Left-wing part out of it now, judging by his hysterics about such scandals as sending Eve Curie, a "*Stalinienne*" (how) to make lectures in America. It seemed war could not be won, or even got under way, until Jean Richard Bloch had been removed from the Commissariat of Information,

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and Sarraut from the Ministry of the Interior. "How do you expect to fight a civil war and a foreign war at the same time?" I asked.

"This made him furious, because this was the *argument massue* of the forces of inertia. (Quite true, it also silenced Kerillis.) "We can't win this war unless we have a purge first," he insisted. He was not sure we should win the war anyway. "Look at those damned civilians; look at those pot-bellied egoists living on as usual." I said I did not believe in the purifying action of war, especially when war quite obviously did not seem real to most people. "Wait till they drop bombs on those civilians," he snorted. "Don't you believe a Parisian can be as tough as a Finn, and behave with as much courage?" This he doubted very much, because the Finns were a people where the virtues of Christianity were still very much alive, while the French had been hopelessly corrupted by a hundred and fifty years of radical socialism. He did not think the civilians would hold out. "When I was in Marseilles I heard women in trams say, 'I don't give a rap for *la Patrie*. All I care for is my son, or my husband.' The women of the south always say what they think, and in Marseilles the prisons are full of them."

"Was it as bad as that in the army? I asked. He said no, it was not, but there was a lot of revolutionary spirit. Also most of them, mainly the peasants, didn't know what it was all about. "I myself have to appeal to my reason, to argue with myself, when I think of the war." He thought it would be a very long war, and it would end with revolutions all over the world. He hoped and believed he would come out of it alive. He was going to devote himself to pulling down the wreckage of radical socialism, and to establish a social structure where Christianity might

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have its place. "A job for several generations. Men like Maritain will have to do the real work, though." His bitterness against the civilians came mainly from the fact that he is the only support of his mother, who is now practically starving. "If I can't get some money for her by roping in a sucker, or a charitable organization, I will hold up someone. Since society sticks me into this uniform, society also owes it to me to support my mother."

February 14

'Lunched with — (a banker) at Maxim's. Had various interesting things to say. Probably knows, as he is very close to the Government. Says with a melancholy sigh that he drew up the financial program of the *Front Populaire*. "*Et comment l'a-t'on appliqué!*" Likes Daladier, who has had a hard life, being sentimentally frustrated. Loved only one woman, his wife, who died very young. Says Daladier's position very strong. All this talk about his resigning, about Mandel and Reynaud gunning for him, also rot. Talk of Paris. "Don't forget that Paris isn't France." Nor are the *milieux industriels et financiers*. Daladier has a very great standing in the provinces and in the army. — thinks he sits tight. Nobody to take his place, anyway.

'Thinks this will be a long war (three years). The Germans might sit still all this year, but thinks they will attack through the Low Countries or very likely Switzerland this spring. Thinks Paris will be bombed. "We have now every means of hitting back." At present the Germans still have superiority in the air, or at least this is what I gather from veiled hints.

'Balkan policy of the Allies absolutely nil, on account of sparing Italy; situation not at all stabilized there, fluctuations in

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Bulgaria for the present viewed with an optimistic eye. But nothing really lined up. Does not think the Allies will attack in the Near East yet, but certainly some day. Will not take the initiative on this front either. Diplomatic activity in Near East now very active, the idea being to line up Persia.

'*About Italy.* What the French press writes is all hot air. The only reason why Italy is not at war with France is because she is not sure for the time being to win. Mussolini is now balancing *sur la corde raide*, but hoping for a German victory. A victory of the Allies would give him nothing. All his activities in the Balkans are to further German interests. The opposition to Russia is just the quarrel of two rival "favorites." Also to keep up the ideological side of the régime. Will only jump in if he sees that Germany wins. Scared of Allied victory on account of his régime also.'

February 23

'François is home on leave. He has spent the last few months at the front, as an artillery observation officer. He did not have very much to say, and did not consider sleeping in the forest in a cold of  $-25^{\circ}$  was worth mentioning. "I had my sleeping sack." None of his men had had frozen feet, he said proudly. He has seen no action, and no Germans. He did not agree that there was no hate against the Germans — "At the front the men hate them, because they are a bloody nuisance, a recurring *emmerdement*, as frequent as inundations or phylloxera. That is why none of us wishes for a negotiated peace. We want to eliminate the nuisance once and for all." André Chamson wrote the same thing — about peace having lost its efficacy. Frenchmen cannot believe in peace again before something has changed. C. D.'s

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commentary to that was bitter: "They won't believe in peace again before there has been a terrible massacre."

'François's fellow officers at the front were mainly P.S.F. At first they talked politics, and quarreled. But now no one even mentions Blum, Franco, Munich, and other nightmares of the past any more. And they all agree that the war must be fought to the end. François tells me Olivier feels the same way about it; Olivier and C. D. had the same ideas before the war — Olivier has turned *jusqu'au boutiste*, C. D. defeatist, maybe because he has already been in the last war. On the other hand, Madame — and her sisters still think there will be peace in the summer. Why, nobody knows! They also will not hear of a "*paix immédiate*" — which some people term "*paix provisoire*." I think on the whole people are suspicious of the actual sit-down war because they smell another Munich.

'François hasn't noticed any defeatism, neither here nor at the front. The Alsatians, he says, are very *gonflés*, and nice to the troops. But the Lorrainers are swine.

'He echoed general preoccupation about treason and espionage going on under cover. Thinks there is a lot of Hitlerism and defeatism in the *salons*. Mentioned the disastrous effect on the men at the front of one of the two bureau officers in his sector turning out to be a German spy.'

'Lunched at my uncle's. Hear again that everyone very suspicious of Italy. That was not at all what people said in the first months. A lot of anecdotes about the spy system, mainly about clandestine radios. Gentleman with car has himself driven, to the Bois, and while he does *du footing* the chauffeur works the *émetteur*. By the time the *appareils de repérage* have located

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where the broadcast comes from, the car has disappeared. Uncle W. claims that a car with a radio set was nabbed recently in the courtyard of the Prefecture. Jaqueline tells story of Michel's former regiment, one of the few Chasseur regiments sent up to the front. When they arrived in the front lines a German loud-speaker opposite welcomed them, giving the number of their regiment, the name, life history, etc., of their captain. The men were in a panic. "We've been betrayed — *nous sommes repérés.*" The captain refused to stay, they had to change sectors.'

February 16

'Vreni and I dined this evening with my friend C. D. a young doctor. His reactions toward the war are very interesting. C. D. has always had strong Left-wing leanings'— anarchist rather than communist — and a few years ago he was a militant pacifist, but he is not an apostle of non-violence. Before and after Munich he was violently *anti-Munichois*; during the Spanish war he favored intervention on the side of the loyalists. He is, moreover, completely honest, very well-informed, and extremely intelligent, a little impulsive in his judgments, but never naïve or bigoted. Brave also, I think. Therefore what he says carries considerable weight with me, when he is giving his opinion and when he is talking as an observer. Somewhat to my surprise, he is anything but enthusiastic about the war. Doesn't see victory except after frightful massacres which will leave Europe a shambles. It would be better to talk now than after two or three million men have been killed, he says. Only he is realistic about it, realizes the difficulties of a negotiation with Hitler. Seeing no way out of the dilemma, he pins his hopes, somewhat childishly, it seems to me, on America, not for intervention but for mediation. He

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questioned me a lot about Sumner Welles's forthcoming trip — as if I knew anything.

'In the provinces, where he has been mobilized since the beginning of the war, C. D. says people are not exactly defeatist, they just aren't interested in the war. If the war gets serious, he says, they will fight on as long as the generals can take it, but if there is a compromise peace there will be no complaints, *au contraire*.

"What do they think of Bonnet?" I asked.

"Bonnet is unpopular. They don't think of him as the man who wanted to compromise rather than fight, but simply as the man who failed to avert war."

"And Daladier?"

"Daladier they think pretty highly of [a general sentiment in the country, as far as I can gather], but not because of the war, just because he has been tough with the Communists."

'Here C. D. went into one of his impulsive flights, partly true but considerably exaggerated, I believe. According to him, hatred of communism is the strongest political force in France, stronger even than the conviction for war or the desire for peace. In the provinces they think of nothing else. The big war aim is not the smashing of Germany or even Russia, but the smashing of communism in France. They are not terribly excited about Soviet Russia and are only lukewarm for aid to Finland, they just want to go for the French Communists.

"Daladier did the Communists a favor by putting them in jail," C. D. says.

'Though he has always been rather anti-Communist himself, C. D. is disgusted with this movement, which he attributes to the ignoble fear, based on avarice, of the French peasant and *petit*

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*bourgeois*. I gather it is one of the reasons why he is fed up with the war.

‘Regarding the English, whom he does not like particularly, C. D. says that ‘in the early days of the war there was a great wave of anti-British sentiment throughout the country, but that it has largely died down, owing to the activity of the British fleet. Not so much the British naval victories as their disasters, their losses, are responsible for the improved feeling. “After all, we are not the only ones who are getting killed in this war.”

‘Interesting footnote on wartime psychology contributed by C. D.: there was one raid of German scouting planes in his region — the southwest. No one saw the planes, but they were picked up by sound-detectors. They were not fired upon or chased. Yet a few days later officers censoring the soldiers’ outgoing mail fell upon scores of vivid descriptions of air battles, bombs falling all around them, etc.

‘C. D. is the second respectable defeatist — what I call respectable — that I have met since the war. Rather I should say the third, counting in an English friend in Paris. The other one was also a doctor, a man of very similar formation to C. D. but older and a deeper student of the human mind. He was even more categorical than C. D. about the necessity of a negotiation.

‘I find all this somewhat disconcerting. My own political convictions do not derive either from an unshakable faith in any particular ideology or from mass movements, but rather from the way in which certain of my friends, men whom I respect both for character and intelligence, apply the general principles, the world outlook which I share with them, to specific political situations. Now it seems that my friends are divided as to what to do about the war. Some think it must be fought to victory



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regardless of cost; others think it does not matter so much how it ends provided it ends quickly. Fortunately, this division does not yet involve any great bitterness. When a defeatist meets a bitter-ender they do not even argue, merely express tangent points of view and trail off into a shrug. The reason: the bitter-ender does not feel proud in anticipation of his victory, and the defeatist does not feel proud of his negotiated peace. Each chooses what he considers the lesser evil.'

March 1

'Returned today from short trip in Brittany, Rennes, and Saint-Malo, traveling third-class in the train for greater local color. With the train service reduced you have to arrive well in advance to get a place; voyagers and luggage are sprawled all over the corridors, and altogether it is a rather joyous adventure. All the trains packed with soldiers on leave returning home, and talk about the war gets under way in every compartment before the train has even started moving. People seem to have no inhibitions, political or military, about expressing themselves in public, and in a quarter of an hour I picked up enough military secrets from garrulous *permissionnaires* to give the censors apoplexy. The striking thing about the war talk, at least the kind of war talk you hear in the third-class compartments, is that everyone treats the war as if it were a natural calamity, not a political question. There is no defeatism and no anti-defeatism, for the simple reason that people don't ask themselves any questions as to what should or should not be done about the war. The rural masses are not political-minded, and apparently war to them is too fundamental a thing to be questioned, like sickness and bad weather. They complain about innumerable aspects of the war,

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but not about the war itself. At the same time they seem rather proud of their personal hardships, as simple people are proud of being ill.

'If one noted down all the grumblings and complaints heard in a single railway voyage across France and sent it to America with a lead: "What the French people think about the war," it would make a sensational document, and provide unlimited ammunition for the species of American isolationists who are constantly screaming to stop the war, like the schoolroom sissy sitting on the floor and bawling with fear because the toughs are fighting. I have seen American reporters come to Europe and do this very thing, but it is a stupid or crooked kind of reporting and means nothing. People grumble, not because they are opposed to the war, but because grumbling makes them feel better. The same is true for much of the grumbling against the Government in oppressive régimes.

'Real pacifists are bad enough, because they do harm with good motives, are foolish for sensible reasons, but the kind of fake pacifists who have sprouted in such numbers and often in such unsuspected places in America since the war began turn my stomach. However, I am supposed to be writing about Europe, not America.

'I expected to find a good deal of defeatist sentiment in Brittany as before Munich, but apparently it was a mistaken idea. The priests appear to approve of the war, and what the priests say goes, as far as the Bretons are concerned. There are, however, traces of anti-British sentiment, and very strong anti-Semitism, as in reactionary circles in Paris.

'One of the local papers had a rather striking editorial. "Plea for Intelligence," it was called. It was a long tirade against

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the censorship and the resultant intellectual apathy about the war.

"The French people, the most intelligent people in the world, since the beginning of this war have been living in a state of intellectual malnutrition. Why have we gone to war? Oh, no doubt for justice, international law, and universal peace. What are our war aims? Universal peace, international law, and justice. Fair enough. But when it comes to concretizing these lofty abstractions, to thinking out these words — that is another story... We are forbidden to say why we are fighting... The people need an ideal, a faith; they need to understand, to see clearly. The French people have confidence in their leaders, they want their leaders to have confidence in them."

"This provincial" prose seemed to me more intelligent and lucid than anything I had read in the Paris press, but on reading the article to the end it developed that in the opinion of the editorialist, war aim number 1 should be: restoring the political rights of the Church in France.

"Much the same state of mind in Saint-Malo as in Rennes, with the exception of one local peculiarity. As descendants of the Corsairs, the Malouins hate the English. The war has not changed them. Rather the presence of British Tommies in the town has intensified the feeling. The most incredible and ridiculous charges are made against the English, the oddest being that they are responsible for cases of tattooing which have appeared.

"Cases of what?" I asked my informant.

"Tattooing," she replied. "They get our girls and tattoo them, mark them for life. It is an outrage."

"Do they use force?"

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"No, I don't suppose so, but they get the girls drunk or catch them in an unguarded moment, and before the poor fools realize what is happening the Tommy whips out his tattoo needle, which they all carry, and *voilà*, they are marked for life."

Two cases were apparently well authenticated: a servant girl in Saint-Malo who had a floral *motif* tattooed on her thigh, and a prostitute in Rennes who had allowed a serpent to be engraved between her breasts and had, according to somewhat vaguer report, died in hospital, infection setting in.

I could not discover whether this tattoo-phobia was the result of whispering campaigns by German propagandists or whether it was an echo of atavistic memories. In any case the Malouins have a peculiar mentality: they don't seem to like the French much better than the English, and have only a very mitigated affection for the Bretons, regarding themselves as a race apart and cherishing their own surliness as symbolic of the corsair heritage, as the Germans admire blond hair.

A luncheon invitation to a *petit bourgeois* home provided an interesting tableau of conflicting currents of opinion. The father, a sort of superior clerk, in a bank I think, stated the classic "*Il faut en finir*" theme in a lucid and well-knit argument, obviously expressing real conviction. He was proud of having been mobilized in September despite his gray hairs, to help get the younger men off to the front, and apparently looked on his several weeks of military drudgery as an outing. His wife and a maiden sister said they hoped Mr. Welles would think of some way out of it, because what was the use of killing off two or three million young men to start all over again in another twenty years, and anyway what had those Poles and Czechs ever done for France?

The daughter, married to a Left-wing school-teacher now at

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the front, made an impassioned speech against the war, which she suspected was being fought by Frenchmen in behalf of British financial interests. She showed me parts of a letter from her husband: "You only learn to love life when you are in the presence of death . . . loathsome war . . . degrading drudgery of military life, nobody reads . . . men get drunk whenever they can to forget . . . world can't go on like this . . . a shakeup after the war . . . the young generation will show us the way."

'I recognized on a more naïve plane the point of view of some of my Paris friends. The girl's husband, of course, had always been an ardent pacifist and she enthusiastically subscribed to his ideals.'

And so it goes.

I make no apology for the incoherence of these notes. This is a rather incoherent war, and it is not strange that human beings react to it incoherently, thinking one thing one day and another thing the next, or more often two different things on the same day.

Two things particularly strike me in these diaries. One is the theme: a bastard peace would be better than a clean victory, which would cost the lives of several million men. As a question of principle I subscribe to this defeatist proposition. But is even a bastard peace possible? Probably it is, but it will be a great deal harder to achieve than many of my friends realize. However, the soundness or unsoundness of the proposition is not what is important. What is important is the fact that the men I have been calling defeatists seem to take it for granted that victory over Germany will imply such a shambles. Perhaps it will. Perhaps it will not. In any event the Allied leaders have not yet

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been able to convince their peoples that victory can be won at a tolerable price, as Hitler for so long persuaded the German people that the career of a highway robber does not necessarily end on the gallows.

Developments during the summer, successful and not too costly operations on minor theaters of the war which are in the air these days, or a really convincing aggravation of the economic situation in Germany, may change all this. There would be no defeatism in France if people believed in a quick military victory costing a couple of hundred thousand instead of a couple of million men. Maybe such a victory is possible, although I am a little skeptical about it. If the war continues in its present form I think the masses of the people would support it, perhaps long enough to starve the Germans out, but the governments would be subjected to terrible pressure from business interests, which, short of a compromise peace right now, would rather see hundreds of thousands of young peasants killed than keep on sinking in the quicksands of economic ruin.

Personally, I should like to see the war ended right now, even if it left Hitler in control of all central Europe, on the sole condition that the German victory did not imply the eventual destruction of France and England. Unfortunately such a peace — that is, a German victory — would imply the destruction, sooner or later, of France and England unless the Allies could count on a support from the United States which they are not getting now. That of course would be an entanglement, and we must not have any European entanglements. All right, then, but in that case stop hawling about the war, and let the men who are fighting it fight it...

I am wandering from the point again. Let us return to the

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second striking thing about my war diaries. more especially about my wife's.

This is the feeling she echoes and expresses, that nobody really knows why the war is being fought, or rather for what positive aim it is being fought, since the negative aim of fighting to save one's skin is perceived pretty clearly, even by many so-called defeatists. 'We have no war aims' is a frequent complaint, and yet it is in many ways a strange one, for Daladier and Chamberlain have stated them rather more concretely than one might expect at the beginning of a war. The destruction of Naziism in Germany, the liberation of Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Poland, guaranties against future aggressions, the reconstruction of Europe with the participation of neutral and ex-enemy countries — these seem pretty definite war aims.

Of course these are all rather general expressions, and the Allied Governments have deliberately refrained from making them too specific and concrete. The promised new order in Europe, generally thought of as some kind of vague federation or series of federations — some enthusiasts even speak of the United States of Europe — is particularly shadowy, but this after all is inevitable, since before it can come into being the war must be won and the foundations for the new Europe laid down at a conference in which the Allied Governments will not have the sole voice. If the judicious principle laid down by Harold Nicolson, that the European conference only get under way a year or more after the peace conference, properly speaking, has finished its labors, is adopted, then it is obviously too early to elaborate any precise program for the reconstruction of Europe.

On the whole the officially inspired comments on the subject which have appeared so far in the British and French press are

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hardly more indefinite than the famous memorandum for a European federation presented at Geneva by Briand in 1930. Yet that aroused the enthusiasm of idealists and the scorn of cynics, whereas the talk today about a United States of Europe, envisaged as a real and fairly immediate possibility, does neither.

It is the same with regard to the moral issues at stake. Chamberlain and Daladier have both proclaimed that this is a war of civilization — Daladier specified occidental civilization — against barbarity. Beneath the hackneyed and unpleasantly familiar phrases there is a reality which very few Frenchmen or Britishers question. I do not question it myself. A sophisticated, cosmopolitan, world-weary British aristocrat, in one of those unguarded moments of sincerity which men of his type rarely permit themselves, said to me between two quips: 'All the same, this war is unlike any other modern war, unlike any war since the Crusades; it is much more a spiritual revolution than a war between peoples.'

The view of the war formulated by American idealists like Dorothy Thompson, that this is a civil war in Europe, a war to end Germany's spiritual secession from the European community, is accepted by nearly everyone in the Allied countries, but it is significant that it originated in neutral America. I sometimes suspect that it arouses more enthusiasm there than here. Perhaps I am being unduly pessimistic. There are, after all, plenty of Europeans who regard the war as a crusade and are fighting it in a crusading spirit. Still, I saw something of the crusading spirit in Spain when I was with Franco's armies, and I have never seen even young Frenchmen or Britishers in the state of exaltation which was normal among all the *bona-fide* partisans of the Spanish counter-revolution. In Spain there were no complaints about having no war aims, perhaps because the war aim



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which aroused the most enthusiasm and satisfied everybody with killing as many of the enemy as possible.

In any case, here is this strange paradox: the French and British peoples know why they are fighting the war, accept the reasons, and still complain that their governments have no war aims.

One reason is perhaps that this war, from the Allied point of view, is so reasonable. It is so reasonable that it is hard to get excited about it. This, I think, is partly a fault in leadership. To my mind dynamic political ideals are largely conveyors of human emotion and, ultimately, symbolic expressions of some dynamic personality. The New Deal is Roosevelt. Nazism is Hitler. The ideology of the Allied crusade is nobody; it is the heritage of all western civilization, of Christian morality, and of reason, but it is not any single hero or group of heroes fighting for these things. If it ever finds its hero, its Führer, it will automatically become less reasonable and more effective.

That is one reason why so many Frenchmen complain that the war aims are inadequate, though they would be the last to admit it. There are other deeper reasons.

There is the anguishing question of security: How are we really going to solve the German problem? By that the French mean: How are we going to put an end to the menace of Prussian militarism? On this question there seems to be some divergence between British and French aims, and even a great deal of divergence within France. It was to cover up these divergences, to keep polemical passions and German propaganda from envenoming them, that the French censorship tabooed the subject of war aims.

Roughly, the British and the French socialists and pacifists

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in their hopes on a revolution in Germany which will cleanse the country of Hitlerism. Then, they think, there will be no more German military menace. In other words, the enemy is the Nazi Party and not the German people.

The hard-boiled point of view, which I should say is the dominant one in France, particularly in the French army, is that the enemy is simply Germany and that the only way to end the German military menace is to break up Germany, to seize territorial gages — the left bank of the Rhine, for instance — to inflict a military defeat so cruel and ruthless that the German spirit will be broken, or at the very least to disarm Germany and keep her disarmed and encircled while the Allies remain armed.

Unfortunately all these things, except the last, conflict in some way with the general humanitarian ideology for which the Allies are fighting.

It is because they have not been able to make up their minds whether the destruction of Germany as a military power or simply the liberation of Germany from the Nazi yoke is their real aim that Allied propaganda has not been able to achieve the single-mindedness which is the fundamental condition of any really effective propaganda. Hence, in France, neither the nationalists nor the internationalists are completely satisfied that it is a sound war.

Nobody is, in fact, and there are still other reasons. The most important, I think, is this: Hitler holds all Europe in hostage, through his alliance with Stalin. If Germany is defeated too thoroughly, there is the danger of Bolshevism. Hitler is like a kidnaper using the body of his victim as a shield. This is felt acutely by Frenchmen of the Right, precisely the people who normally

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would favor tearing Germany to bits. Hence in many military circles the rather pathetic dream of unseating Hitler, splitting up Germany, and at the same time restoring the Habsburgs and the German princes, and making a new Holy Alliance against Bolshevism.

Such ideas naturally alarm the Left and brake their enthusiasm, already none too fiery, for the war. .

To escape from this dilemma and to give the war a universal appeal, Allied propaganda now treats Germany and Russia, communism and Naziism, on the same footing, and it is possible that in the near future this tendency will be given a military expression. Somehow, it seems to me, the reality of the double crusade is not yet vividly felt. It is a precarious emulsion of two hostilities, not a true solution in the chemical sense.

This is a European civil war if you like, but above all it is a civil war in the minds of Europeans, and a civil war in the mind is a neurosis. Hence it is not surprising that there should be so much neurotic thinking about the war, both in the belligerent and in the neutral countries.

Partly the emotional conflict is the result of real clashes of interest, but just as much it is the result of the war of nerves, the previous abuses of propaganda, the dissolvent tactics which aim at destroying social morale by every means, and the ideological collapses. Political ideals are dangerous weapons, and they have been used recklessly by statesmen all over the world, most recklessly and most criminally by two mystic atheists, Hitler and Stalin. We are all suffering from their recklessness.

The confusion, the despair, the feeling of futility about the war, the absence of enthusiasm or even real conviction in waging a fight which is intellectually admitted to be necessary, and

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important — these are consequences of the war of nerves, symptoms of possibly much graver consequences to come.

In so far as I have any motive in writing this book other than to make some money and enjoy the satisfaction of telling what I believe to be the truth, it is to open the eyes of some of my friends in America, intellectuals and idealists, whose moral abdication in the face of the stupefying problems raised by the war is one of its greatest tragedies. I should like to see them open their eyes for the sake of Europe, for the sake of England and France, even, because after all if the Allies win the war Europe may or may not become a more pleasant place to live in, but if they lose it the whole world is certainly and very quickly going to become a much more unpleasant place to live in.

But there is something more important than saving Europe. It is to make sure that in watching Europe's struggles, death-struggles possibly, we do not lose our own souls. Let us intervene or not intervene, but above all let us not pretend to ourselves that the affair does not concern us; let us not prostitute the facts to justify our indifference. Because our indifference is not real and not natural; it is the hangover from the moral narcotics with which foreign and domestic propagandists have been doping us.

## BY WAY OF POSTSCRIPT

LIMOGES, *March 13, 1940*

AT NINE o'clock this morning I finished the all-too-cursory revision of the manuscript of this book. At nine-thirty I purchased a newspaper and the streamer across the front page said: 'Peace has been signed in Moscow.' Hence this postscript, for the end of the war in Finland is a turning-point in the war in the mind of Europe about which I have been writing.

Perhaps the peace of Moscow is not a German victory, but it is the gravest reverse of the Allies and of the democratic cause in the world since Munich. Now, for the first time, the future looks really black, not because of the strategical implications of the Finnish *débâcle*, but because of its psychological implications.

People in France had come to think of the war in Finland as part of their war, the best part to many people, the only part which aroused any real enthusiasm. In a military sense this was not quite correct, but it was felt to be so, and now it is felt that the best part of the war has been lost.

This is serious, but there is something more serious. Our leaders, Roosevelt, Chamberlain, Daladier, have relapsed into the democratic neurosis, from which it seemed for a moment that they had escaped. They did not abandon Finland as they abandoned China, as they abandoned Spain, as they abandoned Czechoslovakia. They did worse. They tried to help Finland as they

## BY WAY OF POSTSCRIPT

helped Abyssinia. But the French and British help was slow and without conviction; the American help, as usual, was a bitter mockery.

If no one had helped at all, it would not have made much difference. If the French and British had said, 'One war at a time,' we should not now have another lost war behind us. The more cautious spirits in France and England wanted to say, 'One war at a time,' but America thought they should be more idealistic and not so timorous, and the parties of the Right badly wanted a crusade against something other than Hitlerism. So they went to Geneva, which America had repudiated and the parties of the Right scorned, and they proclaimed the Holy War to save Finland. Then, having proclaimed it, they found it was too difficult to fight it without Norway and Sweden and without America. And they were still trying to think up some way of fighting it which would not be difficult or dangerous and would not offend anybody when the Finns decided that they had got enough help.

Actually, the help that the Finns got was very important to them, and the possibility that eventually the Allies might make up their minds about something worried the Russians and the Germans and very probably saved Finland from extermination as a nation, at least for the time being.

Unfortunately such results seem paltry when you are fighting a holy war. Now people feel cheated and indignant. Some, quite unreasonably, are inclined to be indignant about the Finns, as some Americans get indignant about the European democracies. Others, more reasonably, are indignant about the Swedes, or the Americans, or about Daladier and Chamberlain. Everyone is indignant about something.

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In a few days they will not be indignant any more, simply depressed. And they will wonder more and more what they are really fighting for.

This is the state of mind which Hitler has so often and so profitably exploited in the past. Unless he has lost his magic he is going to exploit it again. In what way is not certain. Most probably by a peace offensive. Perhaps the peace offensive will not succeed or will only succeed incompletely; that is, save Hitler without destroying his enemies. It seems to me, however, that Hitler has at least a fighting chance of winning another Munich, winning a peace which in reality will be a great German victory. If he does he will really be the greatest German conqueror of all time, and within a very few years the political system which he has constructed, based on a racial caste principle, will probably dominate all Europe, including Russia.

Events move very fast in our time.

## A SECOND POSTSCRIPT

### THE PACE QUICKENS

NEARLY two months have elapsed since I finished what I thought was my final chapter, but events, as I have already said, move fast in our time and a second post-script already seems in order.

Psychologically the aspect of the European battlefield has not changed greatly in the last few weeks. Everything which I wrote after the collapse in Finland could be repeated with greater force after the Allied failure in southern Norway. What is new is the higher pitch and faster tempo of the war.

By all signs we are entering on a much more active phase of the war. This does not mean that the war of nerves is finished and that from now on blood and steel alone will decide the issue.

The German operations in Norway which have already led to a galling Allied reverse illustrate the undiminished primacy of psychological factors in the active phase of the war. I am not merely thinking of the process of internal decomposition effected by German propaganda in Norway and of the final tactics of terror and treason which enabled the German army to forestall the Allies in the southern part of the country.

I am thinking also of the strategical use of terror on a broader scale which prepared and accompanied the offensive in Norway. I am thinking of the preliminary bloodcurdling threats in Berlin of a decisive blow impending in the west, the sudden flare-up of



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hostility in Italy which created on the Allies' southern flank a menace which was at once real and imaginary.

As I write these lines in the first days of May and the ninth month of the war, the psychological preparation for some new German move, as unmistakable as the artillery preparation for an infantry attack, continues unabated. The Italian attitude remains more menacingly enigmatic than ever and Berlin is still dropping dark hints about a blow in the west, which will end the war before autumn.

Speculation as to where Hitler will strike or as to whether Mussolini will enter the war as his full military ally is futile. The important question to my mind is, How will Allied leadership meet the next test whenever and however it comes? The question of leadership which arose in France after Finland seems to have arisen in England now and much depends on how it is settled.

In any case, my feeling is that the decisive moment of the war, its psychological Marne, is very near. When that moment comes, the trend of the war will either be reversed or will become irreversible. Further I believe that once the psychological turning-point has been passed, the strategic and tactical problems of the war may solve themselves with a rapidity which will startle both victors and vanquished.

THE END

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